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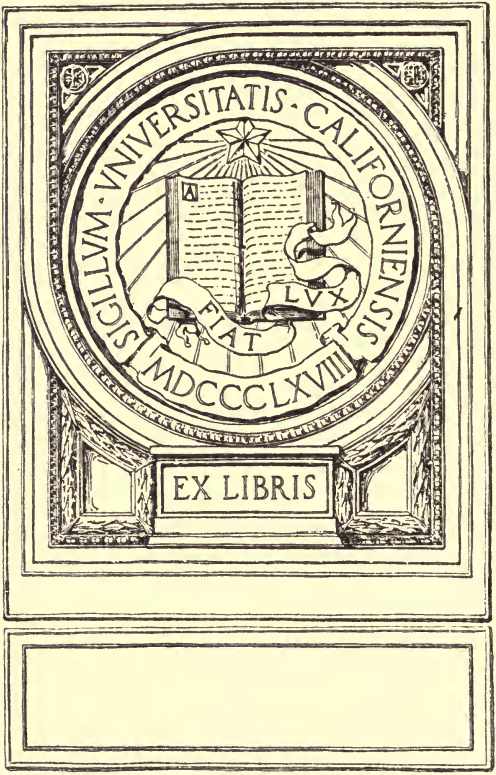

THE TALES

OF

THE SIXTY MANDARINS.

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"THE PRINCESS TOOK UP THE PARCHMENT, AND . . . LOOKED AT HIS FACE" (*p.* 176).

THE TALES

OF THE

SIXTY MANDARINS.

BY

P. V. RAMASWAMI RAJU.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR HENRY MORLEY.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON BROWNE.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS is a real book of new Fairy Tales. Gatherings of legends of the people, partly Indian, partly Chinese, have been touched by the genius of a writer, himself from the East, who brings his own wit and fancy to the telling of his tales, and is as ready to invent as to hand down tradition. A Fairy Tale should be all action, with something done in every sentence, or something said that carries on the story in a short and lively way. Whatever truth there may be living in its fiction must live in the tale itself, as closely joined to it as soul to body. Long moralising in a Fairy Tale is as the sound of Bottom snoring in Titania's lap.

But here is Titania herself in whimsical mood, at play in the East. It is an old playground of hers—she must have been visiting her comrades there, when she made Oberon jealous with "a lovely boy stolen from an Indian king." And Oberon, when he came to tease her for the boy, had not he also, as far as Titania knew, "come from the farthest steep of India?"

Mr. P. V. Ramaswami Raju's best Introduction to readers in England is this book of his, to which he has written his own Preface. He is a graduate of the Madras University; he is a Member of the Asiatic Society; and he had just been called to the bar at the Inner Temple when he left England for India, and left the manuscript of these tales in my hands.

We had come into friendly relations at University College, London, where he was Lecturer on Tamil and

Telugu in the Indian School for the training of Selected Candidates for the Indian Civil Service. A slight official charge connects me with that Indian School by a few duties that bring the pleasure of acquaintance with its students and its teachers. In this way I had become known to Mr. Raju, when he first asked me to read his tales. I said I would, and put them away in a drawer.

After a year I was asked gently for an opinion about them, and again from time to time, at intervals of about a month; and still so gently, without any of the impatient self-assertion common to those who have asked one to read what is worthless, that I thought they would prove good. Then I began to read with hope, and went on with surprised enjoyment. Good Fairy Tales, in these hard-headed times, are rare as grass in the desert.

May the readers of these find as much pleasure in them as I have had in brushing at them with a goose-feather as they passed through the printing-office, light task, as of one "sent before, to sweep the dust behind the door." But now the door is open, and there is good cheer within.

H. M.

University College, London.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In a country like India, or China, where people from all parts of Asia, if not of the world, meet for commercial purposes, there is a free interchange, not only of commodities, but also of ideas.

In the course of such friendly communion, not seldom the speakers cite proverbs, tales, and traditions, by way of argument or illustration, in the way best suited to the special subject of discourse. Listening to such talk, not to speak of higher paths of research, is one of the chief sources from which stories like these might be drawn.

A considerable number of them will be found to be of Chinese origin. Some have for their basis traditions said to be prevalent among the people of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula and the Eastern Archipelago. Some are connected with a number of Tartar and other Central Asian legends that had worked their way into the southern parts of the Continent. Some belong to Persia, Asiatic Turkey, and Arabia. The remaining few may be described as purely Hindu in their character.

The political relations between the East and the West have given rise to some amusing tales. *The Virgin from Velayet* is a specimen of them. The nucleus of this story was found among a section of the Indian peasantry, and must have arisen from that good-humoured representation of Western ideas and institutions, which very often recommends itself to their rustic and unsophisticated hearts.

The Fair Cavaliers was derived from a Persian source; but there is a tale in Indian history very similar to it. The heroine in the Indian story was the daughter of the King of Chittoor, in Rajasthan, and the tyrant outwitted was the rapacious Alla-ud-deen, the Patan King of Delhi. This instance of the same tale being found in two different countries, howsoever it might be explained, recalls to mind the story of the Arabian merchant who knew the language of the lower animals, in the fable of *The Ass, the Ox, and the Labourer*, and the story of King Kikaya and his obstinate queen, in Ramayana, in both of which we have the same narrative pointing to the same moral, though in different words and under different circumstances.

It may be added that the difficulty of tracing the origin, or recognising the position, of these proverbs, tales, and traditions, or their parallels, in "the lore of the learned of the land" will, in a great many cases, be found to be very great, if not almost insurmountable; so much so, that a person versed in the language and literature of the country from which they may be said to have come, would often be at a loss to say anything definitely about their origin; while the fact remains that one who by a mere accident heard "the stray fragments of folk-lore" recited to him, had the advantage of noting and collecting them.

The Story of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid and his Fool, in this collection, may be adduced in evidence of this. The tale was once told, though in a very crude form, by an Arab trader, in Ceylon. The hero of the story is the famous Caliph Haroun Al Raschid and the heroine—his consort—the amiable Sultana Zobeide. Those who are familiar with the adventures of the Caliph, as narrated in the Arabian Nights Entertainments, will find there nothing analogous to it.

Some Arabic scholars of the East, who were consulted as

to its existence in the literature of the Arabs, expressed their surprise at their inability to find there any traces of it. One of them, whose words I have already quoted in this Preface, Wazeer Abdul Ali of Three Maha Mondon Púr, made this quaint, yet judicious remark, with which I ask the permission of the reader to conclude these observations—

"It must have been some stray fragment of the folk-lore of the Arabs, that had nothing to do with the lore of the learned of the land. So far as such popular tales go, it matters not whether they are anchored firmly like great ships in the havens of the writings of the learned, or floating like stray waifs on the seas of the traditions of the people, provided they fulfil the triple conditions of being wholesome, entertaining, and instructive."

To what extent these tales fulfil the conditions laid down by the Wazeer, or whether they fulfil them at all, I leave it to the gentle reader to decide.

P. V. R. R.

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THE

TALES OF THE SIXTY MANDARINS.

THERE was a Prince of China who had a great many learned Mandarins for his friends. They visited him every day, and spent some time in pleasant and edifying discourse. One day, in the course of conversation, the Prince had occasion to observe, "Alas! opium is the greatest curse of our country."

One of the Mandarins observed, "Illustrious Prince, like the fabulous Black Chinaman, who was long the terror of the coast of Corea, the Chinese may escape any and every danger but that proceeding from the odious drug."

The curiosity of the Prince being roused, he said, "Good Mandarin, what is the story that you refer to?"

The Mandarin proceeded to relate the story as follows:—

The Black Chinaman and his Junk.

On the coast of Corea, there was a Chinaman, who lived in a junk. He was black; his junk was black; and the sails of his junk were equally black. He seldom came on land; but when he did come, he generally carried off, as the good people of Corea said, a boy for his breakfast, because he was very fond of eating boys. But he observed one good rule—that he never touched a boy who was not

quarrelsome. So, whenever a boy was missed on the coast, they would say, "The boy quarrelled with his companions, and the Black Chinaman has carried him off."

Again, he was supposed to have acquired perfect control over the water of the sea, and over the winds. So, when the water rose in huge waves, they would say, "Yes; the Black Chinaman is lashing them." If the winds raged furiously, they would say, "Yes; the Black Chinaman is setting them on." If the lightning flashed, they would say, "Yes; the Black Chinaman is lighting his pipe." He was so quick in sailing, that people said they saw his junk in the horizon, and heard the clinking of his anchor chain by the coast at one and the same time. Mothers often fancied they saw his black junk passing on the horizon, and, trembling from head to foot, held their children closely to their bosoms.

The people along the coast of Corea, where the Black Chinaman committed his depredations, long endeavoured to destroy him; but he was so vigilant, that all their efforts proved useless.

There was a little boy named Honoi, who said to himself, "Well, they say the Black Chinaman, who eats quarrelsome boys, lives in a junk by himself. I dare say he has nets, and daily fishes in the sea. Now, what does he do with the fish? Certainly, he eats all the fish. Now, how does he slake his thirst after that? Certainly, with a great barrel of ale, which they say he drinks at a gulp. Then again, they say the hollow mast of his junk has a bowl on the top, and serves him as a pipe, which he smokes in calm weather, when he furls the sails, and lets the junk drift on the sea. So, what with the boys and the fish, what with the ale and the pipe, he must be leading a very happy life, indeed!"

One evening therefore, when the junk of the Black

"On the coast of Corea, there was a Chinaman, who lived n a junk" (*p.* 1)

Chinaman was lying at anchor near the coast, Honoi said, "Good Captain of the Black Junk, will you take me on board? I will cook the fish you eat, and light the pipe you smoke. When you wish to drink, I will hand you the barrel; and when you do want boys, I will point out such of them as quarrel."

The Black Chinaman was glad to hear Honoi say so. He took him at once on board, observing, "Honoi, now cook the fish." Honoi cooked the fish, and laid it on the table. Before he could turn round, the Black Chinaman ate the fish, and said, "Honoi, hand me the barrel." Before Honoi could turn round after handing the barrel, the Black Chinaman laid it down, saying, "Honoi, light my pipe."

Honoi, who wanted a moment to breathe, pretended not to know what he meant by his pipe.

The Black Chinaman grinned, displaying his teeth from ear to ear, and said, "Honoi, you are an idle boy. You will never do with me. You must know before you are told. Now go up to the top of this mast and clean the bowl, while I go down to bring the tobacco."

Honoi went up and cleaned the bowl, and filled one half of it with a great quantity of opium, which he had brought concealed in his clothes.

The Black Chinaman brought a great quantity of tobacco and gave it to Honoi, who filled the remaining half of the bowl with a part of it, and returned the remainder to his master.

"Is the bowl full, Honoi?" thundered the Black Chinaman.

"It is, sir," replied Honoi.

"How did you fill the bowl with one-half the usual quantity, Honoi?" said the Black Chinaman.

"It is all in the doing of the thing, sir; I can do with a little what most people cannot do with much."

"You are just the sort of boy I want," said the Black Chinaman, and putting his right hand on the shoulder of Honoi, took the huge pipe with the left, reclined his head on the helm, with his long whiskers dangling in the sea on both sides, threw his legs on the prow, and smoked till he grew utterly insensible.

Honoi bound him to the junk tightly with strong ropes, and steered it to the shore, shouting, "I am Honoi, Captain of the Black Junk!"

The people assembled in great crowds, and welcomed Honoi as the deliverer of their boys.

They killed the Black Chinaman, and buried him on the coast; but they hung up his long whiskers on a tree, and whenever boys quarrel, the good people of Corea say that the whiskers coil and hiss like serpents ready to devour them.

The Prince, who expressed himself highly amused at the story, remarked, "The Black Chinaman must have been a great glutton to have eaten such a quantity of fish, and drunk so much ale."

The good opinion which the Prince gave of the story, excited the emulation of another Mandarin; so, he observed, "Illustrious Prince, the Black Chinaman was not a greater glutton than the Giant Tabalan."

The Prince asked what the story was, and the Mandarin related it as follows:—

The Giant Tabalan and the Boy Tuck.

On an island, in a distant sea, there lived a giant named Tabalan, and a little boy named Tuck. These two were the only inhabitants on it. The giant was a glutton; the boy

ate little or nothing. So the giant liked him very much, saying, "I like boys that feed on air, and drink ether." He said so because he liked everybody but himself eating almost nothing.

There was a volcano in the middle of the island, which was constantly burning. Tabalan roasted the camels, elephants, and other animals he ate, on its crater. There was a great rock with a flat top: this was his table. There was a nice little valley, in which grew various herbs and plants, which Tabalan ate with his dinner. The whole of this valley he called his vegetable basket.

He generally got up at noon, and finished his breakfast in a few minutes, because he was in a hurry to prepare for tiffin. He would finish his tiffin in a few minutes, because he was in a hurry to prepare for dinner. For dinner he had not much time to spare, because he was in a hurry to prepare for supper.

Tabalan was very fond of being told every now and then. that he ate very little. Of course this was a duty that devolved on his servant, Tuck. So when he roasted a whole herd of elephants, and a number of camels to boot, at the crater, and put them on his table, the boy Tuck would say, "Ah, good master, how little you eat!"

Tabalan would say, with a smile, "Tuck, you are a shrewd fellow. You see what it really is. But we must all eat sparingly, my boy, if we wish to get on in the world." Then he would put into his mouth the trunk of an elephant, or the hump of a camel, and, smacking his lips, drink his wine. This was the water of the sea. By his table was a great pipe, which he put into his mouth and sucked, and the sea-water flowed down his throat. Tabalan said he liked the drink specially for the shoals that got in, and furnished him with an excellent mouthful of fish at every draught.

Tuck would exclaim, "Ah, good master, how little you drink!"

Tabalan would say, "Tuck, you are a shrewd fellow. You see what it really is. We must all drink sparingly if we wish to get on in the world."

When Tabalan rose from bed at noon, Tuck would say, "Good Master, how soon you get up!"

Tabalan would say, "Tuck, you are a shrewd fellow.

"TABALAN GREW VERY FAT."

You see what it really is. We must all sleep sparingly, my boy, if we wish to get on in the world!"

What with his eating, what with his sleeping, Tabalan grew very fat. Neither ox nor horse, neither camel nor elephant could show anything equal to the fat in his body. Now Tabalan was very fond of fat things. So, one day, he looked at himself and his mouth watered. Instantly, he called out, "Tuck, shrewd fellow, come in!"

Tuck came in.

Tabalan said, "Now, I have a project in my head."

"Good master," said Tuck, "I dare say it is a very good one of its kind."

"You are quite right, my boy," said the giant; "now, tell me if you will be able to roast me at the crater and give me me for dinner?"

Tuck said nothing could be more easy, only he wished to know how he was to give him him for dinner after he had been roasted.

Tabalan said, "My life is in this cocoanut. When you have roasted my body, put it down on the table and lay the cocoanut by, saying, 'Master Tabalan, your dinner is ready, and I will be up.'"

The boy consented with a wink.

"Why do wink, my boy?" said Tabalan.

"Ah, good master," said Tuck, "that you are so shrewd as to eat yourself."

"Well," said Tabalan, "we must all be shrewd, my boy, if we wish to get on in the world."

Tabalan went into the cocoanut with his mouth watering again at the thought of the approaching banquet, and instantly his body fell on the ground.

Tuck said to himself, "Well, I have been on this island long enough. It is not every day that Tabalan will propose roasting himself for dinner," and threw the cocoanut into the sea. Instantly, it began to float. By its aid, he reached the mainland where his home was. Then he dug a deep pit and buried the cocoanut in it, saying, "Good Master Tabalan, lie thou there till I ask thee to come up for dinner again."

The spirit of Tabalan replied, "You are, indeed, a shrewd boy, Tuck; you will call me up so soon as you have roasted me for dinner—will you not?"

"Certainly I will," said Tuck, and went home.

In course of time a tree grew on the spot, and the

children of the country often gathered round the tree, while one of them asked, "Good Master Tabalan, will you come up?"

Another would stand behind the tree and reply, "Bid my boy Tuck come up, and tell me if he has roasted me on the crater and made my dinner ready, and I will be up."

The children would then dance round the tree shouting, "Tuck is no more! Tabalan is no more!"

The Prince complimented the Mandarin on the story he had related, observing, "Instances in which people fall a prey to some gross passion of their own, in the manner of the Giant Tabalan, are indeed not rare."

Another Mandarin whose emulation was roused by this praise bestowed on his companion, replied, "Mighty Prince, this story reminds me of the Miser Mywung, who fell a prey to his own cupidity, and the Bag of Blue Velvet."

"Ah, who was the miser, and what had the bag to do with him?" said the Prince.

The Mandarin related the story as follows:—

The Miser Mywung and the Bag of Blue Velvet.

In the city of Cashgar there was a miser of whom the people said, "There is wealth in his coffers, famine at his door, and misery in every nook of his house." He had neither wife, nor children, nor relations, nor friends. Occasionally, an old woman, who affected to pay the same reverence to gold as himself, was permitted to enter the house to sweep it and set the few things in it in the order which best suited him. He cooked his own meals, and as

his wants were very few, he spent next to nothing in gratifying them.

He seldom stirred out of his house, nor did any people visit him; so this old woman was the only medium of intercourse between himself and the wide world. As some of the wags in the city observed, she was the only isthmus that connected the two great continents—the miser and the world at large.

Mywung had got into the habit of consulting this old woman on matters relating to magic and medicine, for the very good reason that her incantations and prescriptions involved no expenditure.

He had also a passion for stories about wealth. Whenever he felt inclined to listen to them, the old woman entertained him with such wonderful tales as the Golden Elephant with the Magic Tail, the Palace of Jasper that had Gates of Adamant, and the River of Molten Gold that flowed from the Emerald Mountain.

In the house opposite to Mywung's there was a great spendthrift named Lywung, in speaking of whom people invariably said, "Heaps of money disappeared at the magic touch of his fingers."

There is a saying that if extremes are put together and divided by two, the quotients would be the media.

Well, if the niggardliness of the miser Mywung and the extravagance of the spendthrift Lywung be put together, accordingly, the mean of common life would no doubt result from the process.

This spendthrift said to himself, "What does the miser do with his wealth? Who is there to inherit it? The authorities will get it after all; so, if possible, let me get it to myself."

With this resolve, he put a piece of silver into the hands of the old woman, and said, "Do you know that I have

with me the wonderful bag of blue velvet that gives me whatever I want?"

The old woman said she did not know.

Thereupon Lywung gave a detailed account of it. The next time the old woman saw Mywung, she spoke to him of the bag of blue velvet.

He remarked, "I was wondering how he was able to spend so much. He must certainly possess something like the bag you speak of to give him money incessantly. I should like to see the bag very much; but only if you should be able to get it for a while from him, for I will on no account permit him to come in."

The old woman communicated this to Lywung.

Instantly he put a piece of gold into the hands of the woman, and borrowing her clothes, altered his guise so as to resemble her as much as possible, and went to the miser in the evening, and in faltering accents said, "Ah, good sir, I have, after all, got the bag for three short minutes. The spendthrift is waiting in the street to get it back."

"What is to be done with the bag?" said the miser with great eagerness.

The old woman said, "It was given to the spendthrift by a Lama in an oasis in the great desert of Gobi. If you wish to examine the marvellous properties of the bag, you must thrust your head into it. There is a noose round its mouth which will be pulled round the neck. The tighter the noose is pulled, the more the wealth of the world that will be seen."

As the time specified was very brief, Mywung thrust his head into the bag.

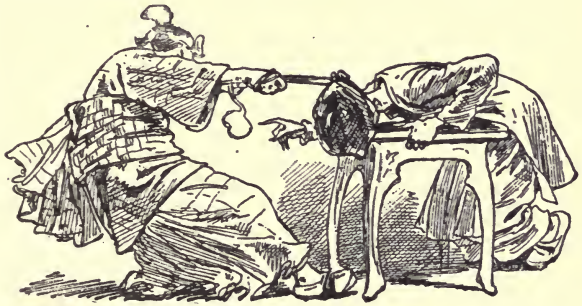
The old woman, or the spendthrift in that guise, pulled the string round his neck. Whether it was the magic in the bag, or the force of his imagination, or all combined, is a mystery to this day; but the miser said he saw more of

the treasures of the universe the tighter the string was drawn.

After all it seemed to reach a point of suffocation, and the spendthrift paused.

"Pull on!" cried the miser, "I have just got a glimpse of the great valley of diamonds with the emerald banks and the ruby caverns!"

Lywung pulled tighter, and the miser dropped down dead as though his spirit had disappeared in one of those caverns in the valley he saw, and refused to return to his body any more.



"LYWUNG PULLED TIGHTER."

The spendthrift gave him a decent burial, saying, "Poor man, this is perhaps the only luxury he ever had;" and took all his wealth to himself, giving a pittance to the old woman who had aided him.

When the authorities asked him how he was entitled to the wealth of Mywung, he said the miser had made it over to him in lieu of the Bag of Blue Velvet, that the latter was his only property, and that they might take it.

The authorities took the bag, and on opening it found such a goodly store of gold coins in it, that they said the ends of justice were completely satisfied, and gave no further trouble to Lywung.

When the Mandarin had finished his story, the Prince remarked that he was greatly indebted to him for his kindness, and that he had well illustrated the maxim—The miser hoards for the spendthrift.

At the same time, the Prince observed that, as a rule, misers, usurers, and other people of the fraternity were extremely wary, and that it was the good fortune of Lywung that blinded Mywung, and made him fall an easy prey to his own cupidity.

Thereupon another Mandarin rose up, and said, "Mighty Prince, the remark that misers and usurers are extremely wary reminds me of the usurer of Ecbatana, who by his cunning escaped the fatal results of his own folly."

"Who was the usurer of Ecbatana? How did he escape the fatal results of his own folly, good Mandarin?" said the Prince eagerly.

The Mandarin narrated the story as follows :—

The Usurer of Ecbatana.

In the ancient city of Ecbatana lived a Jew named Jacob, who was a great usurer. There was a law in the city that if it was proved that a man received interest at the rate of a hundred per cent., he should at once be hanged.

So Jacob contented himself with advancing money at ninety-nine and three quarters per cent., the quarter being the margin left to evade the law.

The officers of justice, who had ever an eye on Jacob and his transactions, were watching for an opportunity to chastise him as he deserved. But the Jew was too vigilant to get into their clutches.

The only other person that lived with old Jacob was his fair daughter Eliam, a virgin whose beauty and amiable dis-

position were well known to the people of Ecbatana. But Jacob was very cautious in admitting strangers into his house.

They came to him only on business, and after transacting it, were promptly shown the street door, without being permitted to loiter in the house for a single moment.

So those who had actually seen Eliam were very few indeed. But "a veil of mystery enhances beauty," says the proverb.

So the people ever spoke in rapturous terms of the extraordinary charms of Eliam, and of the precautions taken by her father to keep her from the sight of strangers.

These reports reached the ears of Vishtasp, the youthful son of the Satrap, or Governor of Ecbatana. He said to himself, "Ah, the virgin Eliam, they say, is fair as the smiling morn in spring. Her accomplishments must, indeed, be rare to make her the subject of conversation throughout the city. That man must, indeed, be counted happy who can call her his wife."

So he went to Jacob, and said, "You know I am Vishtasp, son of the Satrap of Ecbatana. I love your daughter with all my heart, and will do everything in my power to make her happy. So, may I flatter myself with the hope of obtaining her hand in marriage?"

The Jew replied, "Vishtasp, you are yet a boy in charge of a pedagogue; yet you say you have fallen desperately in love with my daughter. It is not difficult to see what has made you so precipitate in the matter. My gold has temptations which you cannot conveniently resist. Well, I know more of the world and its ways than you give me credit for, so the best advice that I can give you at present is to bid the passion cool and go at once to school."

This provoked Vishtasp extremely. So he said, "Jacob, as you have declined to treat the declaration of my love to your daughter with the consideration which it deserves,

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I do not wish to remain any longer in Ecbatana; for, if I did, I should not only make myself extremely unhappy, but may prove a source of danger to you from the ill-will I shall bear towards you. I therefore mean to travel in foreign lands, starting on my journey, as I am, without going home. Will you advance me some money on this inestimable jewel which adorns my turban?"

The Jew pondered within himself for a while on the subject, and concluding that it would be well to send Vishtasp out of the city, said, "Well, when and where will you pay the money back? What interest will you pay on it?"

Vishtasp said, "To your agents at Damascus, when I go there in the course of the year. As to interest, you may charge a hundred per cent. if you please. It is immaterial to me."

Jacob said, "As the money is to be paid at Damascus, will you pay the interest you propose?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said Vishtasp.

So the necessary deed was executed, and the money paid on the jewel.

Vishtasp took leave of Jacob, saying, "You will soon hear from me."

That night, as Jacob was going to bed, a loud knock was heard at the door. He rushed out to see what had happened. The officers of justice, with Vishtasp at their head, were there.

As Jacob gazed at them with a bewildered countenance, they said, "Now, you have, after all, advanced money at a hundred per cent., and have, therefore, put yourself under the power of the law which governs the subject. To-morrow you will be hanged before sunrise. The Satrap is awaiting our return, with you in our custody, to pronounce sentence and then go to bed."

The usurer grew pale as death when he heard this. Soon he recovered his usual self-possession, and solicited a private interview with Vishtasp. His request was readily granted.

The outwitted usurer said, "Ah, Vishtasp, you are, indeed, a shrewd young man. You will certainly be, one day, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Persia. Before bestowing my daughter on you, I wished to know the depth of your cunning; for I had resolved that the most cunning man alive should wed her. Else, I should have been the last to risk my life on such a cheap bargain; for the sum that will accrue to me at the rate of interest proposed to-day will be a mere trifle."

This turn which Jacob gave to the whole affair surprised as well as delighted Vishtasp. Before he could recover from his astonishment, Jacob brought Eliam and introduced Vishtasp to her, saying, "Dear child, this is the young nobleman of whom I have already spoken to you."

From the moment her father had spoken to her of Vishtasp that evening, she had conceived a very favourable opinion of him. Now his appearance and conversation but strengthened the opinion; so she consented to be his wife. The usurer solemnly pledged his word that so soon as the Satrap should give his consent to the contract, the marriage would be celebrated.

The next morning the Satrap was duly informed by his son of all that had happened, and gladly gave his consent to the marriage. The ceremony was celebrated with great pomp. The story goes on to say that the prediction of the usurer, Jacob, that his son-in-law would one day be the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Persia, was fulfilled.

When Vishtasp filled the high office, the good sense of Eliam his wife was one of his safest guides. When he returned from his day's work at the king's court, he laid

down his mantle, saying, "Now, let me sit by my Eliam and refresh myself with her smiles and wisdom."

We forgot all about the officers of justice. They returned to the Satrap, saying, "Sire, we could find nothing to prove that Jacob had advanced money at the rate of a hundred per cent.; so we did not arrest him."

The Prince smiled at this last remark of the Mandarin, and said that Jacob had, no doubt, very cleverly escaped the fatal result of his folly, that his daughter Eliam was a rare specimen of her sex, and that the good opinion she conceived of Vishtasp, when she had heard of him from her father, did credit to her good sense and feelings.

On hearing this, another Mandarin remarked, "Sire, youth and innocence are sure to impress the minds of the fair sex, even as the swain, Hearty Love, of Tonquin, impressed the mind of the Fairy Periwinkle."

"The Fairy Periwinkle!" exclaimed the Prince.

"Yes, mighty Prince, the good Fairy Periwinkle," repeated the Mandarin.

"Ah, let us know all about the fairy at once, good Mandarin," said the Prince

The Mandarin narrated the story as follows:—

The Fairy Periwinkle of Tonquin.

On the shores of the country of Tonquin, in a little shell called a Periwinkle, there lived a fairy, who was considered the most beautiful and accomplished of that beautiful and accomplished sisterhood known as the fairy world.

People had often seen her go out of the Periwinkle, and walk on the beach, in the moonlight, now pursuing the

crabs up to their holes, now collecting pretty little shells. now flying on the breeze some distance over the sea, now talking to a moonbeam about sundry affairs of the skies, now plunging into the waves to see how the people at the sea-bottom fared, and coming up again as trim and tidy as if she had never been into the water; now trembling at the chirping of a cricket, now laughing at the roaring of the waves, and doing a great many other things, which fairies generally do when they go out to amuse themselves. Therefore the people called her the Fairy Periwinkle.

This Fairy Periwinkle one day said to herself, "I have had various offers of marriage from various fairy princes and mandarins; not to speak of the shoals of fairy merchants and bankers that have been constantly swimming after me. But in the whole fairy race I do not think I shall find a husband to suit my heart. So let me seek out some member of the human race, and marry him." With this resolve the good fairy stood in the breeze one evening, and said,

"If possible, I wish to marry a man."

The breeze carried the news into the country of Tonquin, and, knocking at every door, secretly whispered it into the ears of the maid who opened the door, with a special request that she should keep the secret to herself, and on no account gossip about it with others. All the maids promised solemnly to keep the secret. But, in spite of their strenuous efforts to do so, it was somehow known to the people that the fairy Periwinkle was going to marry; so every one of them went up at one and the same time to seek her hand in marriage. The fairy was alarmed when she saw so many surrounding her shell to marry her. So she said:

"I am but one little fairy. I cannot, of course, marry every one of you. So you must allow me to choose some one among you for my husband."

"Ah, that is but fair," exclaimed all the men assembled around her.

The fairy said, "Now let each come forth and plead his cause."

Instantly the lawyer Mandarin stepped forth and said, "I will make an ample settlement in your favour, and deposit the deed in the Periwinkle in which you live, if you

"EVERY ONE OF THEM WENT UP . . TO SEEK HER HAND" (*p.* 19).

will marry me. Further, no bounds to my learning, or the fees I have been earning. In cross-examination I display the greatest animation. In confounding a thief, or tossing a debtor, you can never hope to find my better. Give me your hand, good fairy, and make me for ever happy."

The fairy said, "Sir, I do not understand a word of your speech, nor should you my ignorance impeach."

Then the doctor Mandarin stepped forth with a lancet and said, "Fits, fevers, cholers, colics, with me can never

play their frolics. I have pills, I have potions, I have elixirs; I can pull out your teeth without your tears. Give me your hand, good fairy, and reign the queen of my dispensary."

But the fairy replied, "Sir, I do not want your aid; as yet I am a healthy maid."

Then came the philosopher, adjusting his flowing robes, and said, "I know all about the soul, and all about its future goal. Life, and all its problems great, and all about unerring fate, I have studied, and found that wisdom is the safest guide, and all the rest but bloated pride. Give me your hand, good fairy, and be the first-fruit of my philosophy."

But the fairy said he was in a world too high for her, who was but a little fairy.

Then a youthful swain, named Hearty Love, approached the fairy, and said, "Good fairy Periwinkle, love is all I have to give; by love I move, by love I live."

At once the fairy gave her hand to Hearty Love, the swain; the rest a hopeless band, they lingered there in vain. So the fairy sent them away, saying, she was going to marry, and that they might go home, and went into her little house with the swain.

The lawyer Mandarin said that if ever he should meet Hearty Love he would sue him for damages. The doctor Mandarin said he would bleed him to death. The philosopher said he would prove to the world that Hearty Love was a hymeneal empiric, a marital mountebank, a charlatan that trifled with feminine hearts, and a quack that dealt in love nostrums.

The swain replied he could not hear what they said, for he and his wife had gone to bed.

The people assembled round the tiny mansion of the fairy asked the Mandarins and the philosopher why they did

not accuse one another for having ventured to apply for the hand of the fairy. They replied, as they went home, "It is the first of nature's laws that all our failures have one cause."

The Prince remarked, "No doubt this is a pretty little story; the Mandarins and the philosopher made a mistake when they thought that their learning, or wealth, or wisdom, would produce a favourable impression upon the youthful and amiable fairy Periwinkle. It is therefore a matter for wonder why they applied for her hand at all."

Another Mandarin replied, "Sire, they must have done so in a mood of self-sufficiency, like the learned hermit Papatup, who very nearly drowned himself in the Lake Manasasara, because he fancied he could achieve a feat which was quite beyond his power."

"Ah, let us know all about Papatup," exclaimed the Prince, eagerly; "we have heard of the great lake Manasasara, but never yet about the hermit you spoke of, good Mandarin."

The Self-Sufficient Saint.

To the north of the Himalaya Mountains, in the country of Thibet, there is the great lake Manasasara, which literally means a lake so beautiful and romantic as to be called a creation of the imagination. On the banks of this lake lived a holy Buddhist hermit, named Papatup, which means one that has burned sin, or a person of great sanctity and wisdom.

This hermit Papatup had a great many disciples. But of them all, there was one named Sidhartha, after the great founder of the holy Buddha religion, who was specially dear

to him. Sidhartha was but a youth; yet the benignity of his disposition, the extent of his learning, the depth of his wisdom, the austere purity of his life, and the peculiar sanctity of his character made him a source of special pride to his master.

When asked what his guides in life were, he would reply, "The wisdom of the great Buddha, the approbation of all the dutiful and good, and the faith I have in my saintly preceptor, Papatup, are my only guides through this world of woe."

The fame of Sidhartha spread over the whole Buddhist world, and learned men from all parts of it came to listen to his wise exposition of some of the most abstruse doctrines of the holy faith. In course of time, it so happened that people referred to Papatup himself only as the preceptor of Sidhartha.

Sidhartha had his house on the shores of the lake, at a considerable distance from the spot were Papatup had his hermitage. He spent the greater part of his time with his preceptor, and occasionally paid a visit to his parents, who were justly proud of such a son, and loved him tenderly. Sidhartha was equally attached to them, especially to his mother, who had taught him in early youth a great many good and useful things.

The lady had requested her son to come home on a particular fast day, when she wished to have him by her side. It so happened that on that day a great many learned men from Lassa and other great centres of Buddhist learning and civilisation came to the hermitage and held a very edifying conversation with Papatup and his disciples. Sidhartha, according to his wont, took the leading part, and gave the learned visitors more satisfaction than they had promised themselves from his company.

It was evening when they had concluded, and the learned

men rose, saying, "Now we may separate for a while, for it is the day of the fast." Here they specified the fast by name.

Sidhartha was startled to hear it; for his mother had solicited him to be present that day at home. Across the lake it was nearly half a day's journey in a boat; around the lake on foot it was more. Sidhartha was very sorry for the neglect with which he had treated his mother's request. So he hastened to the wharf where he could get into the boat that was to take him across the lake. But, unfortunately for him, such a severe tempest arose that the boatmen would not stir out from their huts.

"I shall part with all the wealth I am master of, if you will land me on the opposite shore," said he.

They replied, "If you will calm the waves, which rise like mountains, smooth the swelling surf that breaks upon the rocks, and bid the eddying pool stand still, we will leave our huts at once, and do our duty."

Thereupon, Sidhartha, in great agony of mind, stood in the water knee-deep, and said, "If the love I bear to my parents be true, if my faith in my preceptor is sincere, let me reach the opposite shore safely this instant," and got into the lake, essaying to wade through it. To his astonishment, it was knee-deep wherever he went. So, with little or no difficulty, and in a wonderfully short space of time, he reached his house, and had the gratification to hear his mother say, "Ah, dear Sidhartha, you have come just in time!"

Instantly the boatmen ran to Papatup, and told him what had happened.

Papatup asked what mysterious formula his pupil had pronounced before descending into the lake.

The boatmen, who had heard the latter part of Sidhartha's words, said that he invoked the faith he had in his preceptor, and that carried him through the lake.

Papatup argued within himself thus: "If the mere faith which he had in my sanctity and wisdom was able to do so much, how much more should I not be able to accomplish, who actually possess the sanctity and wisdom! Let it not be said that Papatup was behind his pupil, Sidhartha, in working miracles!"

So saying, Papatup descended into the lake, assuring himself and the boatmen that stood near that if the waters were knee-deep to Sidhartha, they would be but ankle-deep

"HE PLUNGED ABRUPTLY INTO THE WATER."

to his preceptor Papatup. But scarcely had he proceeded a few paces, when he plunged abruptly into the water beyond his depth and disappeared. While the boatmen were wondering what had become of him, a huge wave lifted him upon its crest, and tossed him into a deep valley of the troubled waters again, and the boatmen had much ado in bringing him back to shore.

When Papatup regained his senses, he exclaimed, "Ah, pupils may, after all, be superior to their preceptors in wisdom and sanctity!"

When the people living on the banks of the lake came to know the real cause of the mishap that had occurred to Papatup, they called him "the self-sufficient saint," and he was long known as such on the banks of the Lake Manasasara.

When the Mandarin had finished the story of Papatup, the Prince observed, "Instances in which youthful men have proved more holy and powerful than saints of long standing are, indeed, rare. Papatup must have imagined that, as Sidhartha was younger, therefore he was less endowed with sanctity and strength."

Another Mandarin replied, "Sire, Papatup made a blunder which was analogous to another committed by the Righteous Regicide Parasuram, but his disgrace was certainly not so great as that of Parasuram."

"Ah? Who was the Righteous Regicide Parasuram?" said the Prince.

The Mandarin told the story as follows:—

The Righteous Regicide.

In India, in ancient times, there was a great saint, who had the wonderful power of going to any place he liked with the swiftness of a glance of mind. He was popularly known as the Righteous Regicide Parasuram. His father had been killed through the instrumentality of a certain king. Therefore Parasuram took an oath that he would put to death every king on earth that came in his way, unless he was engaged in wedding a lady at the time he saw him. Accordingly, the Righteous Regicide, with a great battle-axe, which was his weapon, killed a great many kings, with their families, and threw them into a lake of blood which he had created.

A few of the kings of earth escaped the fury of Parasuram by marrying a lady every day on which Parasuram paid them a visit. But the rest sent up their supplications to heaven to put a stop to the atrocities of the king-killer, and a voice came forth in reply to this effect—"In the city of Ayodhya,

which is situated on the banks of the Sarayu, in the Kingdom of Kossala, which is situated to the north of the great river Janhavi, or Gunga, will be born of King Dasaratha and his Queen Kousalya Rama, the avenger of your wrongs."

The kings of earth, therefore, waited patiently till the great avenger was born.

While yet Rama was a youth, a sage, named Visvamitra, came to his father, King Dasaratha, when he was at court with his High Priest, Vasishta, and a great many other holy men, and said, "I have been harassed by a band of giants, who have constantly entered my hermitage, and impeded my holy rites and ministrations. Prithee, sire, lend me the services of your son Rama, that I may stay the plundering of the marauders."

King Dasaratha replied, "Holy sire, my son is yet a youth; he cannot contend against the giants you speak of.

The sage replied, "I know the greatness of Rama, whose might consists in truth and holiness. There is your High Priest, Vasishta, who knows it; and there are the other sages of your court, whose holy wisdom has perceived the same."

So King Dasaratha sent Rama and his brother Lakchmana with the sage. Rama repulsed the marauders and put an end to their depredations. The sage Visvamitra was highly pleased.

He said, "Rama, in the city of Mithila, in the country of Vidaha, King Janaka celebrates a holy sacrifice; let us repair to the city."

So Rama, with his brother Lakchmana, accompanied the sage and his companions to Mithila.

After crossing the river Gunga, and passing through a great many provinces and cities, they approached the city of Mithila, where was performed the miracle known as "the Redemption of Ahalya." The beauteous Ahalya was the

wife of a sage named Gontama. In an unguarded moment she erred against the rules of virtue, and the irate sage, her husband, doomed her to an invisible existence, in a wood near Mithila, subject to the condition that she should resume her former shape and rejoin her husband when Rama entered the wood.

So, as Rama stepped into the wood, Ahalya resumed her former shape, and after doing him the honours of the place, rejoined her husband.

When the sage Visvamitra, with Rama and Lakchmana, entered Mithila, King Janaka received them with every attention, and said :—

"You have all heard of the great bow that I have in my custody, and the reward I have promised to bestow on him that bends it?"

This reward was the hand of the Princess Secta, the daughter of King Janaka.

The sage and the Princes said they knew it.

Thereupon King Janaka ordered the great bow to be brought.

Rama took it up with ease, although it was of extraordinary weight, and bent it. In this process the bow snapped.

It must be remembered, in this connection, that the bow belonged to the preceptor of the Righteous Regicide Parasuram.

King Janaka requested King Dasaratha, with his other sons, Bharata and Satrugna, and all his family and court to repair to Mithila, and bestowed the Princess Secta on Rama, saying, "This is Secta, my daughter, your partner in life; accept her with love and esteem, and live happily with her for ever."

Then he bestowed on each of the three remaining princes a princess of his family.

When the royal weddings were over, Visvamitra took

leave of his young friends, and repaired to some holy haunt in the Himalayas, where he wished to spend the remaining days of his life.

King Dasaratha, with his sons Rama, Lakchmana, Bharata, and Satrugna, started on his journey to Ayodhya. When they had proceeded some distance, the earth trembled as if an earthquake shook it, and the saint Parasuram, with his monstrous battle-axe, and a great bow to boot, presented himself abruptly before Rama, and said with a sneer, "Now then, my little man, you snapped the bow of my preceptor at Mithila, and married the fair Princess Secta—did you not? Well, here is another bow for you to bend. When you shall have bent it, we shall have some wrestling, and something else thereafter till you should be utterly discomfited."

Rama said nothing in reply, for it was his wont to say nothing when people bantered. He received the bow, and bending it, he adjusted the string and shaft in an instant.

"Ah, this is indeed another miracle! for he that bends this bow with such ease must indeed be more than human!"

This was not all. In receiving the bow from Parasuram, Rama utterly extracted all his might and energy from him. So he became utterly powerless.

Rama said, "I have fitted the shaft to the string, and you must point out some vicarious victim to it, if you wish to escape."

Parasuram said, "I have long possessed, as all the world knows, the wonderful power of going to any place I like with the swiftness of a glance of mind. Let the shaft demolish that power."

So the Righteous Regicide was deprived of the power, and as he could hardly move thereafter, he did no more harm to the kings of earth, but contented himself with

spending the remaining days of his life on a mountain named Mahendra, where he had his home—ever cherishing with reverence the memory of the great avenger of the kings of earth.

The Prince remarked, "Ah, the story is a good illustration of the adage—'Conquerors often meet with defeat from a quarter where they least expect it.'"

Another Mandarin, who wished to take this opportunity to relate another story to the Prince, said, "Sire, Parasuram, like the Giant Ever-bidding, in the story of Tullima and the Sunbeam, no doubt met with discomfiture in a quarter where he least expected it."

The Prince asked, "Who was the Giant Ever-bidding? How did he figure in the story of Tullima and the Sunbeam, good Mandarin?"

The Mandarin spoke as follows:—

Little Tullima and the Sunbeam.

In the Island of Niphon, there was a giant who went to people and said, "Give me a bidding." When they gave him one, he did it at once and asked for another. When this was given, he did it at once and asked for a third. In this manner, he asked for biddings incessantly and did them.

If any paused or failed to give him biddings, he devoured them at once, saying, "This person has fallen to my share by the right I possess of devouring those that fail to give me biddings."

The people were in despair, and said they would make that person Sovereign of the island who drove Ever-bidding out of it.

A shopkeeper said he would drive out Ever-bidding. The people solicited him to do so at once.

His shop was built of pieces of paste-board, on which were placarded such phrases as "selling off," "selling on," "selling in," "selling out," selling up," selling down," and sundry other challenges to the trade to sell cheaper if possible. The goods in the shop were as well arranged as ever; for he scarcely had a customer from New Year's day to New Year's day.

He asked Ever-bidding to bring customers to his shop. Instantly so many people came that all the goods were sold, and while the shopkeeper was considering what stock he was to take next, Ever-bidding made a morsel of him, saying, "We can sell no more!"

There was a physician, who advertised a great many pills, potions, and panaceas. He told Ever-bidding to bring him a great many herbs and drugs from different parts of the world. Ever-bidding brought them all at once. While the physician was considering what he was to ask him to do next, Ever-bidding made a morsel of him, saying, "You are not such a good pill after all!"

There was a miser, who told Ever-bidding to bring him all the wealth of the world.

Instantly all the wealth of the world was in the hand of the miser.

Then the miser said, "Take me to a lake of gold, where I may bathe; put me by a table of gold where I may dine; lay me on a couch of gold where I may sleep."

Ever-bidding did so.

The miser said, "I have had all the wealth of the world brought to me. I can hope to get nothing more. Fortune is a fickle maid, as the proverb says; so the next moment she may change. Let me therefore go off in this—the happiest condition of my life."

As he thus paused, Ever-bidding came to make a morsel of him.

The miser said, "Ah, Ever-bidding, I am extremely indebted to you for all your kind offices. There is but one wish more to be gratified. Just put me in a coffin of gold, on a hearse of gold, and after driving through a street of gold towards a cemetery of gold, bury me for five seconds in a grave of gold, and then make a morsel of me!"

Ever-bidding was kind enough to do so.

There was a Mandarin who was very learned in the laws of the country.

The people went to him and said, "Good Mandarin, is there nothing in the big books you keep constantly turning, that would enable you to get rid of him somehow?"

Instantly, the Mandarin gave Ever-bidding a great many subtle questions to be answered about brothers and cousins who struggled to get at one another's property; about creditors who wanted to drive their debtors and their children from their homes because the mole-hills they had lent to them had become mountains; about husbands and wives who disliked each other; about people who were prepared to spend thousands to walk by a certain foot-path while those to whom it belonged said they should not; and sundry other points which the Mandarin and the people fancied formed together a clever trap to catch Ever-bidding.

But he answered them all, pointing to the texts and cases bearing on each.

The poor Mandarin had to acknowledge his defeat, and Ever-bidding made a morsel of him, while the Mandarin persisted in calling it manslaughter and murder as he went down his throat.

Then a great many other people tried their skill at giving biddings, but were eventually devoured by him.

There was a little girl named Tullima, who was very

gentle and amiable. She was the only child of her parents, who were very poor. One evening Ever-bidding chanced to meet her as she was returning from the field where her father had been working, and stopped her, saying,

"Give me a bidding."

Her mother, who was close by, said, "Ah Ever-bidding, this is the only child I have; do leave her to herself and go to some one else who may be in a better position to give biddings to one of your wonderful ability and skill."

But the giant was inexorable. So the mother of Tullima stood shedding tears and sobbing aloud at a distance.

But Tullima, with that courage which innocent and amiable hearts often command, said, "Good Ever-bidding, our hut is almost in ruins; make it a nice little cottage." Instantly the hut became a nice little cottage.

"Give father corn enough for the year," said Tullima.

The corn was there.

"Give mamma a brindled cow," said Tullima.

The cow was there.

After asking for some more necessaries of life and getting them, Tullima said, "Good Ever-bidding, I have long been desirous of possessing a sunbeam to myself. I have a pretty little work-box in which I wish to put it, and shall feel much obliged to you if you can get it for me. There are a few yet lingering on the top of the hill there."

Ever-bidding ran to fetch a sunbeam for Tullima, saying, "I have got her after all." But he could not catch any of them.

He said, "These beams seem to help one another in resisting me; I will wait until only one lingers and then seize it."

So he waited. But when the sun went, the sunbeam went with him. Ever-bidding trembled from head to foot,

and left the island, exclaiming, "Alas, what a brilliant career was mine! How sadly it has ended! To be conquered in this style by a little innocent girl on account of a sunbeam —it looks more like a dream than a reality!"

Tullima became the Queen of the island.

"EVER-BIDDING RAN TO FETCH A SUNBEAM" (*p.* 33).

When the Mandarin had finished the story, the Prince said, "Asking people for a bidding, and then devouring them was the dagger with which the giant stabbed his victims. But the proverb says, 'Some day a man's heart may prove the sheath of his own dagger.' So the giant Ever-bidding was, indeed, worsted by his own weapon."

Another Mandarin, who was eager to tell a story of his own to the Prince and secure the praise which had been accorded to his companion, said, "Sire, the Giant Ever-bidding, like the Boy Bahadur with the Magic Club, no doubt, found defeat and ignominy from his own instrument."

The Prince eagerly asked, "Who was the Boy Bahadur? How did the Magic Club turn against its own master, good Mandarin?"

The Mandarin related the story as follows: —

The Boy Bahadur and the Magic Club.

In a country not far from China, there was a boy named Bahadur, who was very fond of stealing other folks' property. At the same time he was very jealous of other thieves like himself. If any of them went to steal the fruit in an orchard, he tried his best to get as much of the spoil to himself as he possibly could. He was very clever and nimble; so nobody could catch him, while most of his associates were often seized and punished. Therefore they remarked that Bahadur had it all his own way, while they were whipped at the end of every doubtful adventure.

The longer his lease of impunity the greater became the greed and vanity of Bahadur. So, he once went to a Genius, who lived in a mountain close by, and said, "Good Genius, I must have some instrument which will glorify me. Do grant me one."

The Genius replied, "Well, to those that have committed ten clever thefts undetected I grant a club called Zubburdust. Those that have achieved a hundred feats of the kind are entitled to a heavy mace called Burra Zubburdust. The illustrious folk that have solved a thousand difficult problems in the thieving art are rewarded with a wonderfully good scimitar called Burra Burra Zubburdust. Now let me know without reserve all that you have done, that I may judge of your merits and reward you accordingly."

Bahadur, who fancied he had done enough to get the scimitar, narrated at length a great many feats in which he

had victimised, with marvellous skill and celerity, apple-women, orchard-keepers, cake vendors, and sundry other people, and deprived them of their wares.

The Genius made a long calculation within himself, and said that all the really clever feats in themselves amounted to nine tricks and three-quarters; that he called them tricks because they were more thieving tricks than genuine clever thefts; that he added by way of grace a quarter, and that made up the number which entitled him to the magic club.

Bahadur was quite mortified to hear that, after all, what he had actually accomplished was so little, so he exclaimed, "Ah, I hoped to get the scimitar!"

"Ah, Bahadur," said the Genius, "we often hope for mountains, when we are but entitled to molehills; so never mind your hopes. Will you take the magic club, or not?—say yes or no."

Bahadur, finding the Genius determined on the subject, quietly consented to take the club.

The Genius handed it over to him, saying, "This will, indeed, glorify you. Whenever you wish to find out a thief, say, 'Zubburdust, bring the thief,' and it will bring him to you, or to anybody else to whom you may direct it, knocking him over the knuckles all the way. But if ever you get into trouble, it will leave you that very moment."

Having acquired this great instrument, Bahadur every morning seated himself on a high rock adjacent to the town in which he lived, and said, "Zubburdust, bring all the thieves of yesterday." Instantly all the thieves of the previous day would be brought to him, with hard knocks over the knuckles.

In that town the greatest number of thieves was among the servants of the Sultan, so among the culprits whom the

club brought to Bahadur daily, figured a great many of the palace servants.

The Sultan came to know of Bahadur as the wonderful thief-catcher, and was glad that he and his magic club were doing such useful work for the public good. But Bahadur had his own principles of equity in dealing with the thieves. He generally took one-half the stolen property to himself, and let them off with the remainder.

One day, to Bahadur's surprise and delight, the club brought to him the chief of the Sultan's eunuchs, dealing hard knocks over his knuckles.

"What have you done, my good man?" said Bahadur, with a laugh.

"Unfortunately, sir, I stole a gem in the turban of the Sultan," said the chief.

"Ah," said Bahadur, with a mischievous wink, "you need not be concerned on that score; we have all our weaknesses. Now let me see the gem."

The eunuch gave the gem. Bahadur put it into his pocket, and fancying it was an excellent opportunity to curry favour with the Sultan, ran to his Majesty, and divulged the secret.

The Sultan asked the eunuch to explain his conduct.

He replied, "Sire, I request your Majesty to ask Bahadur to order his magic club to bring to us the offender."

"That is but right," said the Sultan, turning to the owner of the wonderful club.

Instantly, Bahadur said, "Now, Zubburdust, I bid thee take the man that has stolen the gem in the Sultan's turban, and lock him up in the palace jail."

Scarcely had he finished speaking, when Zubburdust began to operate on the knuckles of poor Bahadur himself—for he had the gem in his pocket—and did not stop till it

had thrust him into jail, and shutting him up in it, left him for ever, for he had got into trouble.

Zubburdust dealt such hard knocks over the knuckles of poor Bahadur, that he exclaimed, "Ah, when this club, Zubburdust itself, is so hard in dealing with its victims, what must be the energy of the monster, Burra Zubburdust, and the fiend, Burra Burra Zubburdust, who, the Genius said, exist in the shape of a mace and scimitar respectively!"

"ZUBBURDUST DEALT SUCH HARD KNOCKS."

The Sultan and his eunuch had a hearty laugh over it. The eunuch, who had done the whole thing on purpose to bring Bahadur to grief, because he had been the source of constant annoyance to the thieves in the Sultan's palace, celebrated his victory over the thief-catcher with all his jubilant companions.

A great many other people who had daily suffered at the hands of Bahadur went to see him, and every one of them said, "Ah, Bahadur, you have been after all glorified by your club!"

As often as they said so, poor Bahadur exclaimed, "Alas! it is, indeed, hard that the thief-catcher should himself be

caught. Oh for a Zubburdust that would not try conclusions with its owner!"

The Prince observed, "So it was, after all, the artifice of the chief eunuch that brought about the downfall of Bahadur."

Another Mandarin observed, "Sire, people that are a source of constant annoyance to others are often subdued, even as Pahili subdued his wife, Comaya, by the aid of the Basket in the Stream."

The Prince said, "Good Mandarin, it must, indeed, be interesting to know how Pahili conquered his wife Comaya. Do relate the story."

The Mandarin related it as follows :—

The Basket in the Stream.

In the Shan country there was a man named Pahili, who had a wife named Comaya. She was one of those women who are never satisfied with their husbands. If Pahili sat, she said he sat in a manner peculiarly his own. If he stood, he did not stand like other men. If he walked, why it was a strange gait he presented. If he coughed or sneezed, why it was a most unearthly sound. If ever he ventured to smile, she exclaimed, "Ah, good husband, what makes you weep?" and if he appeared in good humour, she said, "Ah, good husband, you have the knack of being pleasant in the midst of misery!"

Poor Pahili was, therefore, ever on the alert to avoid giving occasion for such unsavoury remarks. This caution again on his part gave rise to the invariable observation—

"Good husband, remember you are not surrounded by bears, wolves, and hyenas, but in the midst of human beings."

If, pestered by such poignant gibe and banter, Pahili said he would flee to the woods and be happy, Comaya would exclaim—

"Ah, good husband, you will find me there!"

Pahili was not very well off in point of temporal means, but Comaya was very extravagant. Every ornament that women in the neighbourhood wore she must have. Every article of apparel that suited her fancy should be supplied to her at once. In spite of his difficulties, Pahili took care not only to supply all the wants of his wife, but most of her whims also in this department. If, after he had given her some coveted article of dress or ornament, he approached her with an air of satisfaction, she would at once cut him down, saying—

"Ah, good husband, what credit you take to yourself for the trinkets and trumpery that you have got for me to-day."

This would, of course, bring poor Pahili to his senses, and make him eat humble pie.

As time advanced, the wants and whims of Madame Pahili increased. In the course of the same day she often made a great many purchases, and the tradesmen sent Pahili a great many bills; for tradesmen's bills exist all the world over in some shape or other. If they are on paper in Pekin, they are on palm-leaf in the Shan country. The strain was too great on the resources of Pahili. So, after all, he grew bold, and said to his wife—

"Good Comaya, I can give you no more money."

Comaya replied—

"Well, good husband, you speak as if you had given me money before. I should like to know when you did?"

Of course, Pahili confessed, by his silence, his inability to reply to this query; while Comaya threw before him a

great bundle of bills from the tradesmen, which had not yet been paid.

Pahili wreaked his vengeance on the bundle by putting upon it a covering bill with the words, "The result of a wife's extravagance"; while Comaya lost no time in doing justice to her own feelings on the subject by attaching to the bundle another bill with the words, "The result of a husband's incompetency."

Thereupon, words ran high between husband and wife, and they agreed to submit their case for decision to a spirit, who, they knew, lived in a river close by, Comaya specifying the process as follows—

"We will put the bills in a basket and set it down on the stream next morning. If it floats against the current, you are right, and I will be ever after your obedient and humble wife. But if it floats down with the current, I am right, and you shall be more obedient and humble than ever."

"Agreed!" said Pahili, and going to a friend of his, who was famous all over the country as a great swimmer, said—

"My good friend, here is a fair chance of subduing my wife once for all, if you will only help me to-morrow."

Then they conversed long on the method to be adopted, and settled it; while the other, as if he spoke from his own bitter experience on the subject, concluded with the observation—

"All mankind must unite in aiding a man who tries to tame a termagant wife."

The next morning Pahili and Comaya carried the basket together, and set it down on the waters of the stream. Instead of going down with the current, as Comaya had shrewdly imagined, it went up right against it; for the friend of Pahili was in the water pulling it

after him the other way, without giving the slightest indication of his presence there.

Poor Comaya was nonplussed for the first time in her life; and as the basket continued to travel up the stream with incredible rapidity, she addressed her husband as follows—

"Now, if the spirit of the river is really pulling it up the other way, in your favour, let us examine the basket and see if there is any written indication of its will in it."

So, they stopped the basket, and, opening it, they found a note to this effect—

"If Comaya, or any other termagant wife in the Shan country does not rectify her ways at once, let her have the ducking-stool, on the banks of this very stream, without a moment's hesitation, and I shall be on the spot to see that she is well chastised."

The universal fiat of the spirit, who appeared to have issued it in a very angry tone, startled Comaya. From that day forth she seldom stirred out of her house, nor did her tongue stir out of its retreat in that capacious region of human volubility, the mouth. Further, from that day forth Pahili had no more tradesmen's bills to pay; nor had he any unkind words from Comaya.

The story of Pahili's victory over his wife went abroad, and was hailed as a God-send by all the other good folk in the Shan country, who had been similarly afflicted by that prevailing malady, which some have called, in vulgar phrase, wife-bother, and others, more learned and euphemistic, designate by such expressions as uxorious annoyance and connubial infelicity. As the good luck of these men would have it, the wives of the Shan country are to this day in the dark as to the trick by which Pahili subdued his irrepressible wife. So, if a wife should un-

wittingly take it into her head to annoy her husband to any the least degree, the latter exclaims—

"Now, good wife, let us put our quarrels in a basket, and go to the river-spirit for decision."

This, of course, instantly brings the wife to her senses. So the husbands in the Shan country remember Pahili as the great Patriarch of the tribe of successful husbands, while the wives remember Comaya as an ancient martyr to masculine vanity and tyranny.

The Prince exclaimed, "Ah, but for the secrecy with which Pahili conducted his operations, Comaya had not been so easily subdued!"

Another Mandarin, who wished to secure the admiration of the Prince, like his other companions, said, "Sire, a veil of mystery has often sheltered the weakest, and in some instances it has given them the victory over the most powerful opponents, as in the case of the Queer Gladiator, who said he was skilled in symbolical fencing."

"The Queer Gladiator! Symbolical fencing! Who ever heard of such? Good Mandarin, let us know all about them without any further delay," said the Prince.

The Mandarin related the story as follows:—

The Queer Gladiator.

In the ancient Kingdom of Corea there was a monarch, who was very fond of witnessing the performances of acrobats, wrestlers, gladiators, and other prize-fighters. He kept a great many of these men, paying them large sums of money, and training them from time to time under his own personal care. Some, who were considered the strongest and the cleverest, belonged to what was called the First

Brigade. Others, slightly inferior to them in strength and skill, were counted men of the Second. All other men, who had the ambition to perform, but had neither the physical energy nor the training required for it, came under the Third; and the King gave them a pittance from time to time, rewarding thereby, as he said, their inclination to distinguish themselves rather than their intrinsic merit in that respect.

His Majesty was also fond of such men as made him laugh constantly. "He that makes me laugh," said the King, "shall have a high reward, however insignificant his pains may be."

Hence, all the wits and wags, humourists and harlequins, mimics and motley fools, and a great many others of that populous brotherhood known as the laughing and the laughter-making tribe, congregated at the Court of his Majesty, and often drove him to the necessity of holding his ribs very tightly.

Of these, there was one who was as remarkable for his madcap tricks as he was small and ugly in size. The King called him Caterpillar, because, as his Majesty observed, he spun out the threads of his wit and humour even as that worm spun out threads of silk in one of its progressive stages.

The people, with whom Caterpillar was a great favourite, delighted in calling him by such names as Spider-leg, Apple-pate, Currant-eye, from the very diminutive size of the limb or organ referred to in each.

Caterpillar, in spite of all his defects and disadvantages, had the audacity to call himself the Captain of the Third Brigade, observing that all inefficient men went into it; that he was the most gifted with that qualification called inefficiency, and that, therefore, he had the best right to the command of the Brigade.

Not content with assuming the title of the Captain of the Third Brigade, he constantly rallied the ablest men of the First Brigade, saying, "The best men generally go down when there is an emergency, even as the best stones go to the bottom when there is a flood. There will be a day, I am sure, when you will seek my help, and when I shall become your Captain."

The men of the First Brigade would ask, "Ah, Caterpillar, what will you do when you become Captain of our Brigade?"

He would reply, "Why, I will make each of you my horse for a day."

There was a gladiator named Mountain Shoulder, in the Kingdom of Japan, who came to the King of Corea, and said, "I challenge the strongest and boldest of the First Brigade of your Majesty to single combat. I am, as your Majesty sees, seven feet high; my sword is fourteen, and my spear twenty-seven. Should your men despair of coping with me, let them say so to my face, that I may make a note of their names in the list of vanquished foes that I keep, and go to the Courts of other monarchs, where I may find foemen more worthy of my steel."

The King of Corea, who was quite provoked by the defiant speech of Mountain Shoulder, turned to his men.

They said, "We can fight with men, but not with giants like Mountain Shoulder."

"Then," said the King in an angry tone, "am I to understand that there is not one among you to fight Mountain Shoulder?"

Caterpillar stepped forth and said, "Your humble servant will fight Mountain Shoulder, and maintain the glory of your Majesty's name untarnished."

The King laughed outright. But Caterpillar said he was

in earnest, and that he was not to be dissuaded from his purpose.

So Mountain Shoulder was asked to meet Caterpillar in the arena.

Mountain Shoulder waved his sword, fourteen feet long, wondering how Caterpillar would withstand the charge.

But before he could recover from his wonder, Caterpillar said, "Well, my good fellow, Mountain Shoulder, let me tell you I have a sword twenty-eight feet long; but I have not brought it, because I do not want it, as you will see ere long. So put your sword by, and tell me if you have any objection to do a little symbolical fencing at first."

"What is symbolical fencing?" said Mountain Shoulder.

"Well," said Caterpillar, after casting a glance of the utmost contempt at his adversary, "if you do not understand symbolical fencing, which is the very alphabet of gladiators, I would like to know what you have learnt at all."

This struck dismay into the heart of Mountain Shoulder. Yet, as he had to keep up with his adversary, he said, "Well, let us have some symbolical fencing at first, as you say."

"Will you be the aggressor, or shall I commence?" said Caterpillar.

Mountain Shoulder said he conceded the honour of commencing to his adversary, the secret being that Mountain Shoulder did not know how to commence.

Instantly, Caterpillar pointed to the north, brought his hand to the level of his shoulder, then to the level of his waist, then to the level of his knee, then passed an imaginary knife round his own throat, and clenching his fist, shook it at Mountain Shoulder in the attitude of a man who eagerly asked a question, and said, "Now, my good fellow, Mountain Shoulder, tell me what this pass means, and we shall proceed further."

"Mountain Shoulder waved his sword" (*p.* 6).

Mountain Shoulder recalled to his mind all the lessons in fencing that he had received from the greatest masters of the art in Japan; but not one of them furnished him with a clue to find out the meaning of Caterpillar's pass.

So he requested the King of Corea to grant him a day to answer the query. His Majesty readily granted his request.

Instantly Caterpillar stepped forth, and said, "Well, my good fellow, Mountain Shoulder, when next we meet, I shall have to bring such weapons as would be compatible with the size of my adversary; for instance, if it should come to the question of cutting your throat, I shall be able to accomplish it better with a knife two feet long than one of a foot. So tell me with what weapons you mean to fight when next we meet."

Mountain Shoulder, who was absorbed in his endeavours to solve the problem in symbolical fencing which Caterpillar had set him, gave no reply; but went home, and finding himself no wiser at the end of the day, decamped, with his followers, leaving the city at dead of night.

The King asked Caterpillar for an explanation of the problem in symbolical fencing.

Caterpillar said, "Sire, I simply meant that in the northern part of this city there lived in my house my wife, who came up to my shoulders in height; my first child, who came up to my waist in height; and my second child, who came up to my knee in height; that Mountain Shoulder was determined to cut my throat, and that I was determined to know how he was to dispose of them all after disposing of me!"

His Majesty, who roared with laughter, made Caterpillar Captain of the First Brigade on the spot, and he rode on the shoulders of a man of the Brigade every day, and the men bore him with pleasure, calling him their great Captain Caterpillar, who had delivered them from Mountain Shoulder.

But Mountain Shoulder, who, from the day he decamped ignominiously from the Capital of Corea, at dead of night, laid by his list of vanquished foes, remembered Caterpillar as the Queer Gladiator, who was skilled in the mysterious art of symbolical fencing, which he could learn from nobody.

The Prince thanked the Mandarin for the story, and said, "The audacity of the little wretch Caterpillar, when he refers to the question of cutting the throat of Mountain Shoulder with a knife two feet long, is simply provoking. How happy the Japanese giant would have been if he had only known the real meaning of the problem in symbolical fencing!"

Here another Mandarin, who had been watching for an opportunity to amuse the Prince with a story of his own, said, "Sire, it is not every one that can hope to become happy like Maneloi by surmising the real meaning of the professions of others."

"Who was Maneloi, good Mandarin?" said the Prince.

The Mandarin told the story as follows :—

The City that had Seven Gates to it.

In the midst of the desert, on the confines of the Celestial Empire, there was a capricious fairy, who built a city for herself, with seven gates, and a palace in the centre with a lofty tower. These seven gates were not on seven different sides, but in a line from the outskirts of the city to the palace of the fairy.

So a person who wished to reach the palace had to pass through the seven gates one after another. On all other sides the city was so well guarded by fairy soldiers that, as they said, not the winds themselves could enter unnoticed.

This fairy once said to herself—"Everybody hears of people that fall in love with fair women and seek them in marriage. But nobody has yet heard of an ugly female being courted by a man. That man who is prepared to lay down his life for a woman with frightful appearance and manners must, indeed, be counted a true lover. So let me see if such a man exists on earth."

With this resolve she transformed herself into one of the most hideous shapes imaginable. Her head was like the head of a monstrous ape, with an additional eye on her forehead. Her neck was as slender and twice as long as that of a crane. Her waist was thick and round like a drum. Her legs were thin like the legs of a spider, while her feet had claws as big and sharp as the claws of a great eagle. Her whole body was covered with scales like fish, while bristles and feathers appeared scattered here and there, including the face.

Her dress and ornaments were contrived to suit her appearance. Reptiles of various shapes and sizes formed her necklaces and garlands. A string of snails and crabs alternately arranged formed her bracelet on each wrist, and a huge adder, which coiled round her waist, and whose perpetual hisses filled the air, she called her girdle. A great toad and a monstrous hedgehog were her pets.

When she breathed she hissed like a great serpent; and when she spoke, she brayed, as her maids observed, like a donkey that had received a severe beating.

When she had completed her metamorphosis, she posted a goblin at each gate, with special instructions as to their duties, and said, "Now let my lover come and plead his cause."

Of course all her maids assumed corresponding shapes, and formed a little world of hideousness round their

frightful mistress, whom they called their Incomparable Fairy Queen Adder-Girdle.

The fame of the Fairy Queen Adder-Girdle reached the ends of the world. Many a valiant youth came to the gate of the city to see her. To every one who thus came she presented herself on the top of the tower in her palace, and said, "Fair youth, if you really love me, come through the seven gates, and kiss me on my third good eye."

Then she would take up the toad and the hedgehog and kiss them, one after the other, saying, "So will I kiss the youth that seeks my love."

But so soon as the youth scanned her person, heard her voice, and observed her kissing her pets, he would turn his back and fly, exclaiming, "Oh, what a frightful monster! I would rather kiss a flaming torch than kiss such a being! I should like to know who ever will love her!"

The fairy, in the midst of her maids, would shout, "He who for my love is born, will find me fair as summer morn. When he has kissed my third good eye, for a second kiss how he will sigh!"

A man in the Celestial Empire, named Maneloi, who had long heard of the fairy and her peculiarities, said to himself, "Fairies, as a rule, are exceedingly beautiful; but this fairy is hideous in the extreme. Again, the allusion she makes to the fact of her being fair as summer morn, and to the kiss on her third eye, evidently means some mystery which is yet to be unravelled; so I must court her, and see what will come of it."

Accordingly he presented himself at the gate of the city, and said, "I love the Fairy Queen Adder-Girdle with all my heart, and am prepared to lay down my life for her."

Instantly the fairy with her maids appeared on the tower, and said, "If so, fair youth, come up and kiss me on my third good eye."

Maneloi essayed to pass the first gate.

Instantly he was addressed by the goblin in charge of it in these words :—"You must make over some part of your body as the fee for letting you pass this gate."

"THE GOBLIN TOOK HIS RIGHT LEG" (*p.* 54).

"Will nothing else satisfy you?" said Maneloi.

"No," said the goblin, resolutely.

Maneloi surmised that the goblin was simply acting in obedience to instructions from his whimsical mistress, and said, "If so, take one of my legs."

The goblin took his right leg, which he devoured on the spot, and transported him to the second gate.

The goblin here made the same demand. Maneloi gave him his left leg, which he disposed of like his brother at the first gate, and Maneloi found himself at the third. After gratifying the goblin here with one of his hands, and the next three with his other hand, and his nose, and his ears respectively, he found himself at the seventh or innermost gate, where a huge goblin observed, "Unless you give up your heart you cannot pass this gate."

Maneloi, who conjectured rightly that this was the last and the grandest test to which the whim of the fairy subjected him, said, "You are welcome to take my lips, and my eyes, and my life to boot, but not my heart."

"Why not your heart?" said the hideous goblin.

Maneloi said, "Ah, that is for the incomparable Fairy Queen Adder-Girdle."

Just then he saw the Fairy Adder-Girdle with her maids approaching him, saying, "Here I am, to receive your heart that for me you have set apart!"

Maneloi was shocked to some extent by her frightful appearance. It seemed to him as though she was a thousand times more hideous than when he first saw her at the outskirts of the city. Again he conjectured rightly that it was her final effort to be as hideous as practicable before throwing off the guise she had assumed, and with great self-command, said, "Fairy, may I kiss your third good eye?"

"By all means," said she, bringing her frightful face near his, as he had no legs to stand upon.

Maneloi kissed her on her third good eye, when she turned at once into a fairy of surpassing beauty and elegance, and he regained all his limbs and found himself more youthful and vigorous than ever.

The maids of the fairy also regained their former shapes and danced round the happy couple. Maneloi sighed for a kiss almost every second, and the good fairy gave it to him as often, saying that Maneloi was about the only true lover on earth.

Maneloi led a very happy life with his fairy wife in the City with Seven Gates to it; and when people wished to express their admiration of a lover's attachment to his mistress, they would say, "Why, he is as devoted as Maneloi!"

The Prince observed, "No doubt, the action of Maneloi judged by itself is an extraordinary instance of self-devotion in the cause of love. In this respect he was, indeed, unlike a great many who would rather see a whole community perish than sustain an injury themselves."

Another Mandarin remarked, "Sire, Maneloi was certainly unlike the philosopher Nee Wang, who doomed a whole city to destruction at the hands of a giant named Jimlac rather than himself fall a prey to his greed."

The Prince asked who Nee Wang was, and how he came in contact with Jimlac.

The Mandarin told the story:—

The Giant Jimlac and the Philosopher Nee Wang.

In the Peling Mountains, which is a range in the Celestial Empire, there lived a giant named Jimlac, who was remarkable for his truthfulness and honesty. At the same time, he was very fond of eating men on New Year's Day. At other times other animals formed his prey. Being

a very honest giant, he disdained breaking upon men at unawares, so he generally gave them notice in these terms :— "Know ye, people of the Celestial Empire, New Year's Day is approaching; we abhor taking people by surprise; so, when we come round, all the liars that may be found in our way will become our prey."

The last words of Jimlac's notice need explanation. He never touched a man that was not an habitual liar. Every liar of this kind he found out by some secret clue. So New Year's Day in that part of the Celestial Empire became a day of lamentation and woe, as so many people fell a prey to the greed of Jimlac.

Therefore, on that day, everybody shut himself up in his house, and the whole country presented a silent and melancholy aspect. This precaution of the people often enraged Jimlac. But as he never battered a door that was closed, he often returned without eating a single man.

One New Year's Day Jimlac went through a great city near the mountains, and finding every door shut, stood opposite to a little house, and said, "The cat Jimlac is come in request of his mouse; let every inveterate liar in this house come out to meet him."

The only inmate of the house was a philosopher, named Nee Wang. He opened the door ajar, put out his spectacled face in solemn style, and finding the giant there, trembled from head to foot, saying, "Ah, Jimlac, my good fellow, is it you?"

Jimlac said, "Nee Wang, under the cloak of philosophy and wisdom, I know you have told a great many lies in your day; so, throw off your philosophic guise, and fall a prey to me."

Nee Wang said, "Jimlac, surely you will show some consideration to men of learning. I have read all the volumes in the Imperial Library but one. I shall have

finished this one also by next New Year's Day. Till then disturb me not."

Jimlac replied, "You are the only one that has fallen in my way, and you know this is New Year's Day."

Thereupon the philosopher Nee Wang looked into the calendar, and finding it to be New Year's Day, heaved forth a deep sigh, and said to himself, "In spite of all that philosophy and religion say, nobody knows for certain what will become of us after death. It may be, there is nothing like life after death. So we must endeavour to live as long as we can. Again, of all nature's laws, the first is self-preservation. In this respect, it will be well to remember the story of the two peasants, Ting and Ming, who had to stand for three days on the top of a slippery pole in the midst of an inundated stream, and of whom Ting made himself more secure and comfortable on the fourth day, by throwing Ming into the stream, when he fell into a slumber as he stood on the pole weary with watching and hunger. I know this Jimlac is an inexorable fiend; and that the people of this city are all extremely vigilant on this day. Yet, if I do not devise some means of gratifying his greed, I must fall a victim to him."

With this object in view, he first tapped at every door in the street in which he lived, and when the inmates asked who it was, said, "Ah me! it is your friend Nee Wang in distress!"

When they opened the door, Jimlac, who followed the philosopher, also entered the house, and ate up all the habitual liars that might be found in the house.

In this manner, a great many houses had been entered and a great many people eaten up, till, fortunately for the people of the city, they came to the house of a hag, at whose sight the giant himself was shocked—for she was so hideous in appearance.

Before the giant could speak to her, the hag said, "Ah! good Jimlac, how happy I am to see you! You have till now eaten men raw; would you like to taste them roasted? I have some on the spit, and if you can give me a philosopher to be cooked with them, you will have a dish that you never tasted in your life."

"Here is one," said Jimlac, and twisting the neck of Nee Wang gave his body to the hag.

This hag, who was a great sorceress, pretended to have roasted it, and sprinkling over it a poisonous herb, known in that part of the Celestial Empire as "Giants' Bane," gave it to Jimlac, and he fell dead at her door after eating it.

The people of the city assembled round his carcass with great joy, and praised the hag for her philanthropy. They came to know that it was the selfishness of the treacherous Nee Wang that had been the death of so many people that day.

So they exclaimed, "Jimlac, fiend though he was, never deceived us. But for Nee Wang, many of us who perished should be living now. Fiendish honesty is, indeed, better than philosophical deceit!"

The Prince observed, "No doubt, the conduct of the hag was, on the whole, commendable; but for her the whole city might have suffered through the treachery of the man Nee Wang. It is, indeed, a wonder why he called himself a philosopher with so many frailties about him."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, the hag was instrumental in saving a great many people, even as the man Dicklemar, in the story of the Boa-constrictor and his Wife.

The Prince remarked, "Good Mandarin, not one of us has ever heard the story, I am sure; so let us share the delight of knowing it with you."

The Mandarin, who was highly flattered by this remark, related the story as follows :—

The Boa-Constrictor and his Wife.

In a mountain region in Manchuria there was a sorceress named Dickima, who was so very wicked and whimsical that she married every morning a husband, and in the evening transformed him to some animal, as a toad or chameleon, a hedgehog or porcupine, an elephant or a rhinoceros. It was also written in the book of fate that she should forget all her magic, and become an amiable and accomplished young lady, so soon as someone of these animals should seize her and swallow her piecemeal—the animal also resuming thereafter the form of the fair youth, her husband.

In this manner, many a poor youth had been inveigled into matrimony with the sorceress and converted into some hideous animal.

There was a clever young man named Dicklemar, who lived in that neighbourhood, and who said to himself, "It is, indeed, deplorable that nobody has yet put an end to the ravages of this woman on the young men in this region. I must try to do so. I know what is written about the sorceress in the book of fate. If I succeed I achieve three great feats—I rescue a great many young men from the wiles of Dickima; I obtain an excellent wife; I shall become famous all over this country as the man that subdued the wicked witch, Dickima. If I fail, I shall no doubt be transformed to some hideous shape and continue in it till death put an end to my misery."

So he presented himself before Dickima one morning, while she was in quest of a husband, and said, "Fair

Dickima, I have been long in love with you. I know your rules as to the period of living with a husband after marrying him. I am prepared to sacrifice the rest of my life for that one happy day which I shall be able to enjoy in your company."

As Dickima had been in quest of a husband that morning without finding one, she readily agreed to the proposal of Dicklemar and proceeded to prepare for the marriage.

Dicklemar said, "Sweet Dickima, when you have done with me into what animal do you propose transforming me?"

Dickima said, "Well, I am extremely kind and considerate in that respect. I shall transform you into the animal that you choose to be."

Dicklemar thanked her for her kindness and said, "If so, will you be so good as to transform me into a great boa-constrictor? I wish to be that animal for the rest of my life."

"Certainly I will," said Dickima.

So they were married at once. According to her wont she treated her husband with great kindness, and when the evening approached she said, "Now, good husband, prepare for your fate."

Dicklemar said, "Alas, good Dickima, will you not permit me to spend another day with you. How happy have I been in your company to-day!"

"Ah!" said Dickima, "if I should show such lenity to you, every one of my former husbands will claim the same from me, then I shall have to marry every one of them again, and grant him the indulgence; so prepare for your fate at once."

"Good Dickima," said Dicklemar, "can't you make an exception in my case. Ah! how I loved you within the

brief space I was your husband. Is there not a spark of mercy in your bosom that can warm it to forbearance and consideration?"

"Not the slightest," said Dickima; "when I make a rule there is no exception to it at all!"

On hearing this resolution of his amiable wife, poor Dicklemar appeared to resign himself to his fate, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "Good Dickima, in consideration of my devotion to you, will you, at least, give me a kiss in my transformed shape before bidding adieu to it?"

Dickima said she would, and leading him to a wooded valley between two mountains, pronounced a magic spell and sprinkled some water over him. Instantly he became a great boa-constrictor. According to her promise, Dickima bent to kiss her husband in his hideous metamorphosis, when he seized her by the lips and coiled round her at once with frightful hisses.

Poor Dickima could not help herself, as her lips were so seized as to prevent her from moving them to pronounce the formula with which she could disengage herself from the monster. So the boa-constrictor reduced her frame to a great many pieces, and swallowed them one after another.

The Manchur historian, who has handed down to posterity the story of the Boa-constrictor and his Wife, says that, as often as the monster put a piece of her body into his mouth, he hissed forth the query, "Well, piece of my beloved wife, Dickima, have you got anything to say, now that you are going down to my stomach?" That every piece but the last went in silently; that this last, which was her tongue, replied, "Good husband Dicklemar, the only part of a woman that is never-ending is her tongue; so your stomach cannot digest me!"

When the serpent had swallowed this also, he assumed

his former shape, and the sorceress, Dickima, stood before him, in the form of an amiable young lady.

Dicklemar embraced his wife tenderly, and the two went home, and lived together thenceforth in such amity and love that everybody called them the happiest couple in the country. Dickima would often look at her husband and smile, and when he asked for the reason, would reply, "Ah, good husband, some women have whims, which, if uncontrolled, will lead them to marry a husband every day, and turn him into a monster in the evening!"

As the remark was based on her own life prior to his metamorphosis, Dicklemar would smile at it, and say, "Ah, good wife, I am so happy to see you are so very different from your former self! What a comfort it would be to many a husband on earth to be able to say so!"

The Prince thanked the Mandarin for the story, and said, "Dickima was a sorceress; but Dicklemar was evidently in utter ignorance of the art, yet he triumphed over her. Wickedness often proves its own ruin!"

Another Mandarin remarked, "Sire, innocence often triumphs over wickedness, even as the milkmaid Maralana triumphed over the Dragon, which she boiled to death in her pail."

The Prince said, "Why, good Mandarin, she must have been a wonderful milkmaid, indeed, to have boiled a dragon to death. Do permit us to make her acquaintance."

The Mandarin was highly pleased to hear this good-humoured request of the Prince, and proceeded to narrate the story as follows:—

How the Milkmaid Maralana Boiled the Dragon to Death.

In the island of Sagalean there was a Dragon, which had the remarkable power of hearing the cries of children at a great distance. If a boy or a girl cried, the Dragon was there, saying, "I am here; you can cry no more."

Suiting the action to the word, it would carry off its victim to its cave, and eat it little by little, saying, "A crying child is a dying child in my opinion. I will show it no mercy."

In this manner, a great many of the children in the neighbourhood had been carried off by it, as every one of them cried at some time or other, forgetting the Dragon.

There was a little milkmaid, named Maralana, who was a very quiet girl. She seldom spoke loud. People said she had not cried even once in her life.

The Dragon saw her one day, and said to itself, "Ah, what a nice looking girl this Maralana is! I must have her for dinner some day. But she would never cry, and I cannot get at a girl that will not."

Then the Dragon took the form of a pretty little doll, and was dancing in the way of Maralana.

She went to take hold of it; but, just as she was going to seize it, the doll disappeared. Maralana felt as though she could cry at this disappointment, but, remembering the Dragon, kept quiet.

The next day, the Dragon assumed the form of a nice piece of cake, in a tempting little dish, and lay in the way of Maralana.

She went to take it. Just then the cake and the dish disappeared. Maralana felt as though she could cry at

this disappointment, but, remembering the Dragon, kept quiet.

The next day, again, the Dragon stood in the way of Maralana in the form of a beautiful bouquet. But she took no notice of it, remembering the doll and the cake that had deceived her.

"THE DRAGON SAW HER ONE DAY" (*p* 63).

The Dragon was in despair; so it stood in the way of Maralana in the form of a little girl, while she was carrying her pail full of milk, and said, "Good sister Maralana, will you give me a draught of milk? I feel so thirsty!"

Maralana asked her to come near to have the milk.

The little girl cunningly upset the pail as Maralana lifted it up to give her a draught, and all the milk flowed out on the ground.

Maralana stood silently gazing on the scene.

The little girl said, "Ah, sister Maralana, I am so sorry that the pail has been upset. At the same time, I wonder you do not cry even now!"

Maralana said, "Ah, little sister, never mind the milk. I am so sorry the pail was upset before you could slake your thirst. There is no use of crying over it, losing courage, like a silly girl."

"Ah," said the little girl, "what is courage, good sister Maralana?"

"Why," said Maralana, "it is that which has kept me so long from the Dragon. If once I had lost it, and cried, I should have been devoured by it long ere this."

The Dragon, which was in the form of a little girl, said to itself, "Now, so long as Maralana keeps in her possession this thing called courage, I shall not be able to have her. First, let me therefore find it out. I am also curious to know what it is made of."

Maralana had been listening with a keen ear to the words which the little girl had whispered to herself, and concluded she was the Dragon in that guise. So, when the Dragon requested her to show what courage was, she said she couldn't do so unless she got into her pail.

So the Dragon got into the pail, and Maralana closed the lid tightly.

"Why do you close the lid so tightly, sister Maralana?" said the Dragon.

"Else, you will not be able to see courage," said Maralana.

"If so," said the Dragon, "close the lid, and put a piece of rock over it, that there may be no chance of its escaping at all, as I am eager to catch it at once."

"Very good," said Maralana, adopting the valuable suggestion at once. Then she lighted a fire, and put the pail over it.

Some time after, the Dragon said, "Sister Maralana, I feel it hot."

Maralana said, "Then it is near."

A while after, the Dragon said, "I feel it very hot."

Maralana said, "So it has come nearer."

"Maralana," said the Dragon, "I assure you I cannot stay a moment longer within this pail."

"Hold hard, good sister, it has entered the pail," said Maralana.

Soon after, the Dragon exclaimed, "I am dying, good sister Maralana! Ah, how have you been able to keep this thing with you, that is killing hot?"

"Rather it is that which kept me, and which kills you now," said Maralana, as the last groans of the monster died on her ears.

To this day, whenever their children cry, the mothers in the place say, "Now, would you boil the Dragon in the pail, or let it eat you?"

The Prince remarked, "Indeed, Maralana was a wonderful milkmaid; but it is not every milkmaid that gets a dragon to be boiled to death in her pail in that style." Thereupon, another Mandarin stood up and said, "Sire, it is not every milkmaid that gets a dragon to boil, even as it is not every one that converts a stone into a throne, as Sultan Dinwar Mandeel did."

The Prince asked the Mandarin to be so good as to relate the story, and the Mandarin complied with his request as follows:—

The History of Sultan Dinwar Mandeel.

In a country named Dabulistan, there was a farmer named Baman, who was a distant cousin of the Sultan of the country. But, as he was poor, he kept aloof from his royal relative, attending to his own calling of cultivating his paternal acre. The Sultan had often expressed a desire to see his cousin. But the cousin was a philosopher, so he as often sent him this reply:—"The honey that bees collect often goes to the share of men; similarly, the wealth hoarded by misers goes to the share of spendthrifts. Whereas, the boa-constrictor, that cannot move from the place where nature had first deposited it, liveth comfortably, although its frame is so long and bulky. Having long considered the characteristics of these, I have betaken myself to a life of solitary meditation. So I ask none for anything that I may not have. I am not sorry I have it not. Should others ask me to see them, I do not decline. I neither exult nor grieve to excess in connection with any subject."

The Sultan, who had the highest respect for the life and character of his cousin, therefore contented himself, saying, "There will be a day when we shall have to meet each other on business. Till then, good cousin, please yourself."

Baman had an only son, named Dinwar, whom he educated with great care. Dinwar was more ambitious than his father. He would often assemble a number of other youths of his age in the village, and speak to them about the government of kingdoms. They would seat him on a rock in a wood near their village, call the rock a throne, the wood a kingdom, himself being their Sultan, and themselves his ministers and subjects.

On such occasions Dinwar would often ask the youth that played the part of his Grand Vizier, "Have they come?"

The Grand Vizier would reply, "Sire, the elephant and the men will soon enter the village, and your Majesty ride out in state towards the capital of the Sultan."

This conversation was sportive—Dinwar fancying that some day an elephant from the Sultan would come and take him to Court, and the Grand Vizier giving an appropriate reply.

The good farmer Baman would often go to the wood with his wife, and entertain her with the spectacle from a distance. The fond mother on such occasions would invariably exclaim, "Ah! Dinwar has such princely dignity about him when he sits on the rock throne, that I wish the rock had been transformed into a real throne, the wood into a real kingdom, and the boys into real ministers and subjects!"

Baman would reply, "Good wife, such aspirations are unbecoming in people of our position. The hedgehog cannot hope to leap from precipice to precipice like the mountain goat. But should it please heaven that Dinwar should one day be a king, why he will be one."

One day, while the youth and his companions were playing in the wood as usual, an elephant with a rider in a howdah on it approached the village. It was a most unusual sight, so the villagers flocked round the elephant, and demanded what the rider wanted. He replied, "Let us know the direction in which the house of Farmer Baman is."

Everybody in the village knew the house, so they led him at once to it. Instantly the rider descended, and addressed Farmer Baman as follows:—

"Sire, I have been directed by the Sultan to bring your son to the capital this instant."

Baman, with his wife, who was eager to know what the Sultan wanted Dinwar for, led the rider on the elephant to

the wood, where his son was playing with his companions, as usual.

The elephant went in sight of Dinwar and his companions, just as the former asked his Grand Vizier the usual query, "Have they come?"

So the Grand Vizier replied, "Sire, after all they have come."

"SALUTING THE MOCK SULTAN."

The rider saluting the mock Sultan, said, "Sire, the Sultan wishes to see you this moment at Court."

Dinwar replied, "Sultans are not like ordinary people. They cannot leave their kingdoms when they like; let me therefore first appoint a council of regency to look after the affairs of my kingdom."

So a council of regency was appointed, and Sultan Dinwar, with his Grand Vizier, got into the howdah on the elephant, while his parents and the other inhabitants of the village watched his movements with pleasurable surprise.

When Dinwar arrived at the capital the Sultan received him with great attention, and was extremely pleased to hear from his messages of the council of regency, which he had appointed before starting.

The Sultan assembled the chief officers and dignitaries of his Court around him, and gave Dinwar these three questions to answer: (1) Why should not people be made to pay taxes whenever the Sultan pleases? (2) Is mercy compatible with justice? (3) How should friends agree?

Dinwar, after some consideration, replied: (1) Trees have their seasons to bear fruit; even so, people have their seasons to pay taxes. (2) Just as the softest and sweetest flowers may blossom on trees with the hardest trunks, mercy may blossom on the branches of the strictest justice. (3) Friends should agree to agree as well as disagree.

"How many eyes and arms has a Sultan?" said his Majesty.

Dinwar, after some consideration, replied—

"As many eyes as he has judges, and as many arms as he has soldiers."

The Sultan was delighted to hear these answers which Dinwar gave, so he said—

"You were, till now, called the Sultan of some wood near your village. We now bestow on you the title Sultan Mandeel, or Sultan of the Universe."

Then, turning to his ministers, courtiers, and subjects assembled before him, his Majesty said—

"We have this day adopted Dinwar, or, as we would call him, Sultan Dinwar Mandeel, son of our good cousin Baman, as our son. The Prince shall henceforth be treated with the respect due to the heir-apparent to the throne."

The people and the whole court of the Sultan rejoiced to hear of the adoption of Sultan Dinwar Mandeel.

Baman and his wife soon arrived at the capital, the wife observing—

"After all, Dinwar has converted his stone into a throne, indeed!"

While the husband replied, "Good wife, heaven had so willed it, and so it has been."

The Sultan, addressing Baman, said, "Ah, good cousin Baman, we have met after all on business, have we not?"

Baman gave no reply, for he could hardly find terms for it.

Of course, Sultan Dinwar, or Sultan Dinwar Mandeel, as his adoptive father called him, gave up asking any more "Have they come?" as they had actually come and taken him away to fill the throne for which he had been intended by heaven.

The story goes to say that in course of time Sultan Dinwar Mandeel ascended the throne, with his boy Prime Minister for his Grand Vizier, and that the two brought the country to such a prosperous condition that the reign of Sultan Dinwar Mandeel passed into a by-word for a period of perfect peace, prosperity, and happiness.

The Prince remarked, "Dinwar seems to have been born with the germs of greatness in him."

Another Mandarin, who was eager to contribute to the amusement of the Prince, said, "Sire, if not, the Sultan who adopted him must have been disappointed even as the Virgin from Velayet was in her husband, who set about imitating the institutions of her country."

The Prince asked who the Virgin from Velayet was.

The Mandarin told the story of

The Virgin from Velayet.

There was a Sultan of Damascus, who had long heard of the freedom and enlightenment of the people of a certain country in the West called Velayet. He said to himself, "Why should not my people enjoy the same freedom? Why should they not be as enlightened as the people of Velayet? The person that exercises the greatest influence on a man, for good or evil, is his wife. This is true of every man—be he prince or peasant. I am young; so, if I marry an enlightened virgin of this country—Velayet—she will exercise over me such a wholesome influence as will be highly beneficial to my people."

With this resolve, the Sultan sent for a slave dealer in his capital, and said, "Can you get a fair and accomplished virgin from Velayet for me?—I wish to make her my Queen."

The slave dealer went out, saying he would try, and returned some months after with a young lady of rare beauty and accomplishments, riding on a milk-white mare, and said to his Majesty, "Sire, I went to the country of this lady, which is in the far West, and had, first of all, to conceal my occupation, for such a thing as slavery neither exists, nor is tolerated, in that land. The people of the country generally advertise for everything they want. If a man wants a wife, he may advertise for her also, if he chooses to do so. So, I advertised for a wife for your Majesty. This lady sent me a reply, and finding her every way suited to be the Sultana of this kingdom, I have conducted her to your capital."

The Sultan was very glad to see the Virgin from Velayet. He married her with great pomp, and the royal couple spent their honeymoon together in the summer palace.

From the moment the lady from Velayet became the Queen of the Sultan, she proved extremely attentive to his interests. His Majesty was so deeply impressed with her sound sense and highly useful and elegant attainments, that he requested her to describe to him in detail all the institutions of her country. She did so. The Sultan was extremely delighted with everything he heard. So he said, "My dear Sultana, I wish to adopt a great many of these institutions that you have detailed. How shall I proceed?"

The Sultana replied, "Sire, you must, first of all, abolish slavery in your dominions, and make it a crime under all circumstances; for slavery may be said to be the first great curse of mankind."

The Sultan abolished slavery throughout his dominions that very day.

The Sultana said, "Sire, make a rule that every man that chooses to marry shall not take more than one wife; for man can have but a single partner in life."

His Majesty ruled that henceforth all persons marrying more than one wife should be severely punished.

The Sultana said, "Sire, make a rule that no man shall remain in the country, who is an able-bodied idler, and acquires not sufficient means of sustenance for himself and for those that must depend on him for aid."

His Majesty at once banished all idlers from his dominions, and the remaining people bestirred themselves to such a degree that everywhere prosperity began to smile.

"Sire," said the Sultana, "let people speak out what they have to say, whether in favour of your Majesty and your ministers or against you all; for no Sultan can be safe that knows not the hearts of his subjects in full."

His Majesty granted perfect liberty of speech to all his subjects, and soon had the satisfaction of doing and undoing a great many things for their welfare.

The Sultana said, "Sire, let every man be tried by a body of men of about the same condition in life; for this mode of trying him will secure perfect justice to the person accused."

His Majesty proclaimed such a form of trial throughout his dominions.

In this manner, in course of time, the Sultan, guided by his wise Sultana, introduced a great many useful institutions, undoing some that were positively pernicious in their character; so that all the arts of civilised life began to flourish in the country.

Then the Sultan said, "My dear Sultana, you spoke to me of the great assembly in your country of all the wise men in it; shall we not have one of the kind here? Of course, in your country, the members of this body, as you said, appear to spend a great part of their time in factious declamations and hair-splitting harangues. Again, there appear to be two parties in the body, one saying 'no' to every 'yes' of the other, out of sheer party spirit and jealousy. When one party gets into power, the other goes about the country inflaming the hearts of the people against their successful rivals till they pull them down and step into their place. But we can effectively guard against these evils."

The Sultana, who took great interest in the welfare of her subjects, and who was eager to see them enjoy all the great benefits—social and political—which people in Velayet had secured to themselves, requested to be informed about the manner in which his Majesty proposed guarding against the evils he had enumerated.

His Majesty replied, "Why, my dear Sultana, we will make this rule and enforce it vigorously—that any member who talks for more than five minutes, or indulges in factious discourse, should be instantly led to execution!"

The Sultana smiled at these words of his Majesty.

The Sultan asked why she smiled.

Her Majesty replied, "In spite of the numerous improvements your Majesty has introduced into your country, your despotic instincts remain unaltered. Of what avail will it be to form an assembly of all the wise people in your country, if every member that talks for more than five minutes is to be led to instant execution? At that rate, in the course of a few hours, not a member will be left in the assembly.

The Sultan perceived the disappointment of the Sultana, and remarked that he was himself surprised at what he had said, and that he deserved to be led to execution for it instantaneously.

"There, again, Sire!" exclaimed the sadly disappointed Sultana, "The instincts are the same whether they point to your Majesty's self or subjects. Freedom is a plant which grows by nature in the hearts of some races and their sovereigns. The germs of it can seldom sprout and take root in soils unaccustomed to their culture!"

The Prince remarked, "Evidently, the Virgin from Velayet was taken by surprise by the last outburst of the Sultan's despotic instincts."

Here another Mandarin, who was eager to tell the Prince a story of his own, observed, "Sire, the remark of the Sultan about punishing the wise men of the assembly, indeed, took the Virgin from Velayet by surprise, even as the Aerial Musician astonished the orphan youth, Chucker."

The Prince asked the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows, thanking the Prince for thus giving him an opportunity of contributing to his amusement:—

The Story of the Aerial Musician.

In the province of Fergana, there was an orphan youth named Chucker, who spent his time in going round the village in which he lived and doing the biddings of the boys and girls in it. If a boy was going to school, Chucker carried his satchel and slate for him.

If a peasant girl was taking her father's breakfast to the

"CHUCKER INSTANTLY GAVE HIM A HELPING HAND."

fields, Chucker would run up to her, saying, "Fair maid, let me carry the basket for you," and did so.

If a shop-boy was struggling under a great load of goods which his master had given him for a customer, Chucker instantly gave him a helping hand, saying, "Let me do myself the pleasure of relieving you."

If a girl was asked by her mother to fetch some grass for the calf, and went out with basket and scythe, Chucker

would accost her with these words :—"Ah, fair maid, my hands tell me that they were made for work!" and do the work for her.

As the schoolmaster of the village observed, Chucker was an indispensable companion of the children in all their sports and amusements. At leap-frog, he lent every one his shoulders; at hide and seek, he was invariably blind-folded; at Jack o' lantern, he carried the light; at monkey on the tree, he was the tree; at dummy horse, he was the groom.

He never stayed for a moment at any one place; but, as the children said, he was here, he was there, and he was everywhere, at one and the same time—with such wonderful rapidity did he regulate his movements.

As to his personal comforts, he was the best fed, the best clothed, and the best lodged in the village. Having no house of his own, he made everybody's his, and ate where he chose, as hunger called, and slept where he chose, as sleep overtook him. Some, therefore, called him the son of the village, and some, the son-in-law. Thus Chucker was at everybody's door, in everybody's way, doing everybody's pleasure, and seeking everybody's favour. So no wonder Chucker became a great favourite with the boys and girls of the village—so much so, that they often said, "We can do without ourselves, but not without Chucker."

Again, Chucker had a strange prejudice against wedded life. He often remarked, "I see so many husbands and wives constantly quarrelling in the village, that I am led to conclude that, if I should get a wife, I shall have to prepare to fight it out with her almost every second of my life. Further, I cannot be so free then as I am at present."

One day the boys and girls of the village said, "Chucker has long been our faithful companion. He has a strange

prejudice against being married; so let us content ourselves by celebrating his marriage in sport."

Accordingly, they invited him to go to the banks of a river close by. Chucker said, "If you will put a girl by my side, and call her a wife"—he feared to say my wife—"even though in sport, I will scream and run away."

The children promised not to do so.

They took him to the banks of the river, and on the sands, in the pleasant moonlight, celebrated his marriage, with a great quantity of cake and fruit, to which full justice was done. The children danced round him, saying, "Chucker, what says your wife?"

As often at they asked him the question, a voice in the air, which seemed to accompany a lute, sang in response, "His wife will see him, sure, to-night, when you should all be out of sight."

The children were alarmed; so they exclaimed, "Ah, who is the Aerial Musician!" and ran away from the place, with Chucker, who, of course, joined them in the flight.

When the elders of the village heard about the Aerial Musician, they said, "Surely, some spirit has taken a fancy for the youth Chucker, and may visit him ere long!"

Chucker trembled when he heard their words, and said, "Whoever the spirit may be, I hope she does not want to marry me, when she actually comes to visit me!"

After all, Chucker found a bed for the night and crept into it. It was his wont to sleep at once. But on this occasion he found a strange fidgetiness coming over him. While he was endeavouring to free himself from it, he heard the same sweet voice in the air that had been heard in the river. While he was wondering who the Aerial Musician was, a fairy with a lute in one hand and a golden plate with a cover of brocade in the other, descended—Chucker

knew not whence—and said, "I am Little Dill, your wife, and here is your supper!"

Chucker, who was overcome by surprise and sorrow, said, "I want no supper, I want no wife; if you will leave me to myself, I shall be thankful all my life."

Scarcely had he finished speaking, when the fairy gave him such a shaking, that he thought he would fall to pieces. So he said, sobbing, "Ah, Little Dill, what is your will?"

The fairy replied, "Acknowledge me as your wife first, and then I will speak to you further."

Chucker sobbed forth, "But I never married you."

The fairy said, "Ah, you did!"

Chucker said, "We simply played at a children's wedding."

The fairy replied, "Ah, you can't trifle with matrimony like that. It is a law of Fairy Land, that when children play at husband and wife they should be such for life. But when a youth is married without a bride, to give him a fairy is our pride. You were married without a wife, and I have been made your partner in life. To shun me now will be in vain; love me, if you would wake again!"

Poor Chucker could not help taking Little Dill, the Aerial Musician, for his wife.

The next morning, the children were astonished to see Chucker, with his wife, going about the village in quest of a house; for he could no more eat where he chose, nor sleep where he might find a bed. The children asked him for an account of all that had happened.

He did so, and concluded as follows:—"I shall be happy to join you in future at hide and seek, or dummy horse, or Jack o' lantern, or monkey on the tree; but never at a wedding, though in sport."

"Why not?" said the children, laughingly.

Poor Chucker gave this plaintive reply, "He that plays

at man and wife is sure to have a partner in life ; if he would be free from care, let him of that game beware ! "

The Prince said, " Poor Chucker is, indeed, an object of pity, for he had to accept the fairy for his wife, in spite of his prejudices against a married life."

Another Mandarin remarked, " Sire, a man may find himself a husband while he had been fondly fancying he was not one, even as the Sultan, who was under the sway of the Genius of Adversity, while all the while he imagined he was not."

The Prince said, " Good Mandarin, let us hear the story of the Sultan, who was seized by the Genius of Adversity."

The Mandarin told the story as follows :—

The Sultan and the Genius of Adversity.

There was a Sultan in Persia, who, from the cradle to the throne, knew not what Adversity was. After ascending the throne, he had such a prosperous reign that there was no occasion whatever to know it.

So one day he said to himself, " Ah ! people often speak of Ill-fortune, Adversity, Reverses, and such other things; but I have not seen one of these. Perhaps the genii that preside over them are afraid of me."

Scarcely had he finished his speech, when a Genius, with flapping wings, descended from the skies and addressed the Sultan as follows :—

" Your Majesty fancies that you are exempt from my power—for know, I am the Genius of Adversity—but it is a great mistake. If I choose, I can take hold of your Majesty at any time I like."

The Sultan said, "If so, appoint a day when you would exercise your influence over me."

The Genius said, "The Ramazan is fast approaching. On the last day of the month, when you are in the midst of your courtiers, surrounded by all the might and magnificence of your exalted position, I shall seize you."

The Sultan said, "How long will you keep me in your power?"

"Say for a hundred twinkles of the eye," replied the Genius.

"Agreed," said the Sultan.

The Ramazan came.

As the last day of the month approached, his Majesty assembled all his ministers and generals, and giving them an account of his conversation with the Genius, concluded as follows:—

"So you must take special care that the Genius does not get into the palace by some unguarded opening. You have ever evinced the greatest fidelity to my cause. In this instance, I trust you will prove it more than ever."

The ministers and generals instantly set about fortifying the city on all sides. The palace of the Sultan, especially, was surrounded by ramparts, with buttresses and bastions. from which sentinels watched without winking. The whole edifice was covered by a gigantic net of steel which protected it like the shell of an egg; and the Sultan shut himself up in its inmost recesses, where, as some of his courtiers observed, not a breath of wind could enter unnoticed.

On the day mentioned by the Genius, the Sultan, accoutred in mail, with his scimitar by his side, sat on his throne, surrounded by his ministers and generals, who were all similarly equipped. The moment when the Genius said he would seize his Majesty was very near,

Just then, one of the courtiers said, "Sire, we have taken every precaution against the entrance of the Genius into the palace. If, in spite of all our vigilance, he should succeed, by some superhuman device, in making his way into the edifice, he will no doubt repair to this hall, where your Majesty generally gives audience to your courtiers and subjects. So I suggest that your Majesty at once leave this place, and hide somewhere in the inner apartments—aye, in such a spot as you may be never expected to occupy."

The whole Court applauded the suggestion; so his Majesty went in.

The Sultana, who was equally anxious about his safety, at once asked an old female slave, in whom she had great confidence, where his Majesty could hide without raising in the mind of a stranger the slightest suspicion as to the exact place of his concealment.

The slave replied, "Madam, his Majesty has been known to go into every part of the palace in your company. There is but one nook in it where he has not been. If permitted, I shall point it out."

"Do," said the Sultan, in a hurry.

The slave pointed to a sewer under the ground, which had long been shut up.

Instantly his Majesty crept into it, ordering his chamberlains to keep the bath ready that he might go to it at once, after emerging from the hole. The stench within was insufferable, yet his Majesty made a shift to count the hundred twinkles of the eye, which the Genius had specified as the period of his sway, and then came out.

After bathing and dressing again, the Sultan went to the hall of audience, where his courtiers received him with loud shouts of applause, for having thus eluded the Genius of Adversity.

His Majesty addressed them as follows, after the tumultuous uproar caused by their shouts had subsided :—

"We have after all conquered the Genius of Adversity. He could not seize us during the stipulated period of time. Of course, we owe this victory to your vigilance. Well may the Sultan that has such ministers and generals around him, exclaim—I am proof against the machinations of all adversaries."

Then his Majesty distributed among his courtiers shawls, turbans, and robes of inestimable value, in recognition of their meritorious services.

When every one of them had received his reward, the Sultan, according to his wont on such occasions, said, "Should there be any among you whom, by oversight, we have not duly rewarded, let him step forth."

Instantly, the ceiling of the hall of audience opened, and while the courtiers stood wondering at it, the Genius of Adversity descended through the opening with flapping wings, and said, "O, Sultan, where is my reward?"

His Majesty was astonished to see the Genius there, and much more to hear his words,

So he said, "You are almost the only person within my knowledge who has ever claimed the reward due to success after having suffered an ignominious defeat."

The Genius, who appeared to have been roused by this remark of his Majesty, said, "Ah, you are about the only person in my knowledge that would not acknowledge defeat when it has been actually inflicted on him!"

The Sultan said, "Prove it."

"Ah," said the Genius, "if I had not seized him, how would the Sultan of this great kingdom have hidden himself in a sewer and counted a hundred twinkles of the eye therein!"

"Enough!" said the Sultan, bowing his head low

"the Genius of Adversity may seize a man in his very endeavours to avoid it!"

The Genius left the hall promising to return whenever his Majesty should require his services. But as his Majesty took care not to see him again, or wish for his company, he never met him thereafter.

The Prince observed, "No doubt great credit is due to the courtiers of the Sultan for having guarded him with such vigilance, although the Genius contrived to outwit them."

Another Mandarin said, "Sire, their endeavours were after all, in vain, even as the endeavours of the misers of Balk to preserve the famous Book on Alchymy."

The Prince asked the Mandarin to tell the story, and the Mandarin did so in the following manner :—

The Famous Book on Alchymy.

In the great library at Balk there was a quarter known as the Misers' Corner. In this there were a great many books on alchymy.

The people who chiefly resorted to this part of the library were misers, who, being ever eager to enhance their wealth, constantly turned up the pages of the volumes, in expectation of alighting on some recipe for converting baser metals into gold.

Of all the books thus stored up on the subject there was one which was considered of great antiquity. It had been composed many thousands of years before by a magician and philosopher, who was born in Ethiopia, who studied in Egypt, and, after travelling throughout the then-known world, came to Balk, where he embraced the religion of Zartusht, and settled down with his disciples.

In the course of his extensive researches, almost into every branch of knowledge, he collected the materials for his great work, and wrote it down in three parts.

The first part treated of various methods for making gold by the aid of appliances in the vegetable kingdom.

In the second, the great philosopher described the properties of various animals, by whose aid the same end might be accomplished.

In the third, he detailed a number of minerals by contact with which the same result would necessarily follow.

This volume, by special orders of the High Priest of Balk, was kept locked up in a great iron chest. From times of remote antiquity a fabulous sum was fixed as the fee for taking out a copy of the volume. The only one who paid the enormous fee and took a copy was a king of ancient days named Crœsus.

The iron chest was guarded by a body of soldiers with drawn scimitars. The misers who flocked to that part of the library were not allowed to go near the chest. But their avidity to do something in connection with it was so great, that they strove to touch it at least with their fingers.

A special fee was levied on this, at the rate of a silver piece per finger; if a miser paid two pieces of silver, he could touch it with two fingers; if three, with three fingers, and so on.

This quaint mode of levying the fees was a precaution against the speedy wearing out of the iron chest—for so many misers came to touch it, from time to time, that there was a visible diminution in its bulk by constant contact with the millions of misers' fingers passing over it.

The librarians and other officers, who witnessed the fees paid by the misers, would exclaim, "To be sure, this is the only kind of fee that they ever paid in their lives!" It became a saying among the wags in the city, that, if a person wished

to see all the denizens of miserdom, he ought to go and watch them as they paid their fees to touch the iron chest.

After all, an army of Arabs laid siege to the city, and took it by storm. After giving up the whole city to plunder, they entered the library, and at once doomed it to destruction. The Arab General, who was deputed to look to the work of annihilating the library, stalked in barbarian grandeur through the long rooms and corridors.

His followers pointed to the grand collections of books on every branch of human knowledge, which were arranged on all sides, and concluded with the remark, "These works may be divided into two classes—those opposed to the Koran, and those that contain things already revealed in it."

The General replied, "The first class of books must go to the flames, because they are against the Koran; the second must share the same fate, because they are contained in it. The first are heretical, and the second irrelevant."

After the destruction of the rest of the library, they came to the misers' quarter. Instantly, all the misers of Balk, who had assembled to protect the iron chest that contained the famous Book on Alchymy, exclaimed with one voice, "The iron chest is our ark; it contains our covenant with Mammon; we will defend it to the last man."

Two haggard Jews among them, who were but eyes, bones, and skin, stood, one on each side of the chest, exclaiming, "We are the cherubim; who will take the ark from us?"

The Arab General paused, and asked for an explanation of the scene before him.

When his followers explained it, he exclaimed, "Ah, the iron chest is the Kebla of these men; so they are determined to stand by it!"

Here the misers, with one voice, said, "We will give

you the amount of wealth you would name, if you will but save this volume from the flames."

The General said, "On that condition, the volume may be permitted to exist."

Instantly the misers held a conference. For a long time they could not decide as to the sum that each was to subscribe, to make up the whole amount.

Then the question arose as to which of them was to be the custodian of the volume. After all, they came to a settlement on these points, and each went home to bring his share of the money.

On the way, each thought over the matter again, and came to the conclusion that the directions in the book might, for aught he knew, be genuine or spurious—so he had better not pay the money.

As the misers did not return with the money, the Arab General threw the iron chest, with its invaluable contents, into the flames. Such of the misers as lingered in the corner paid the final obsequies to the chest, by clinging to it tenaciously to the last; and the Arab soldiers had to cast them out, one by one, by sheer force, and then proceed with the work of final destruction.

The misers who had gone home did not escape with their wealth, as they had fondly imagined. The Arab soldiers followed them at a distance, and so soon as they recognised their houses, they broke into them, and carried off the wealth of the misers, who, in this style, not only failed to ransom the chest, but lost the treasures which they had valued more than their own lives.

The Prince remarked, "The poor men, in their endeavours to save the chest, lost the wealth they had so long been hoarding; no doubt their fate is pitiable in the extreme."

Another Mandarin stood up, and said, "The misers of Balk are as much to be pitied as the people who sold all their kine in expectation of having the Ocean of Milk at their doors."

The Prince wished to know all about the Ocean of Milk, and the Mandarin related the story of

The Ocean of Milk.

There was a King of a certain country, near the Celestial Empire, who believed implicitly everything his priests told him. It was written in their sacred books that there was somewhere an Ocean of Milk.

The King, therefore, said to the High Priest one day, "Holy sire, the fact of the existence of the Ocean of Milk is no myth, I suppose?"

"Your Majesty may as well doubt your own existence!" exclaimed the High Priest.

"If so," said the King, "the milk in this ocean must be infinitely superior to the milk ordinarily obtained from kine; it is a wonder that people have not made use of it."

The High Priest replied, "Your Majesty is aware of the fact that one half the world is made of atheists, a quarter again of sceptics, and of the remaining quarter, the true believers are, again, but as the ring-finger."

The last metaphor of his holiness puzzled the King. He said to himself, "This may mean that the true believers are one in five, taking one hand alone, or one in ten taking the two hands together, one of the hands having no ring-finger properly so called."

But as high priests should not be asked unnecessary questions, or such questions as would convey the remotest inkling of doubt or infidelity, the King feigned a clear

knowledge of the whole, and said, "Holy sire, may we not undertake a journey to the Ocean of Milk? A bath in it ought to sanctify us. A few drops from it carefully brought home should provide the whole country with milk for ages to come."

This last remark of his Majesty needs explanation. It was written in the books of the priests that if a few drops of the Ocean of Milk were brought into a country, and emptied into a cistern, it would at once be filled by the magic drops, and continued unabated for ages to come, be the quantity of milk consumed ever so great, hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly.

The High Priest said, "Holy thoughts do not come to all. Your Majesty, in your sanctity and wisdom, has conceived a glorious idea. Great ideas have great obstacles in their way. Therefore, the sooner we start for the Ocean of Milk, the better."

Instantly his Majesty gave orders that all the kine in the country should be sold, and that every one should build a large cistern for himself, into which a few drops of the milk from the great ocean would be poured, to the eternal benefit and happiness of the owner. So all the kine in the country were sold, and everybody built for himself a cistern to be filled with the milk from the ocean.

The Prime Minister, who knew the real character of the record in the holy books about the Ocean of Milk, was alarmed at the credulity with which the King was preparing for his journey. So he went to the High Priest in secret, and said, "My good sir, do you really believe in the existence of this Ocean of Milk?"

The High Priest said, "Well, I have not seen it; the books say that it exists, and when kings believe the books the priests ought to be only too glad of it."

Thereupon the Prime Minister put a heavy purse of gold

into the hands of his holiness and said, "This is, of course, more substantial than the drops of the imaginary Ocean of Milk; so let me soon hear from your holiness that the King has been successfully diverted from his purpose."

The next morning, when the King went to see his holiness, he observed, with a melancholy face, "Alas, I am, indeed, sorry to tell your Majesty that the Ocean of Milk has curdled. I have just now received the information, and

"HERE IS A VIAL CONTAINING A FEW DROPS OF IT."

here is a vial containing a few drops of it in its present condition, which the messenger brought from my friend, the spirit that guards the ocean. Of course, the calamity must have resulted from the infidelity of some one of us."

The King imagined it was his own fault. The High Priest, with equal modesty, said he rather thought it was his own. Then the King asked for a few drops in the vial, and the High Priest gave them to his Majesty, saying, "It is, indeed, a holy treasure!"

His Majesty sprinkled the drops on his own head, and said it was at least some gratification to have seen the curdled milk of the ocean.

The people of the country, who had sold all their kine

to foreigners, assembled round his Majesty in turbulent crowds. His Majesty looked at the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister addressing the people, said, "In future you should take care not to sell your kine, even when the Ocean of Milk is actually brought to your very doors, for, even then, it may curdle at any time!"

The Prince said, "The subjects of his Majesty must have been very simple-minded, indeed, to have sold all their kine, trusting to such a contingency."

Here another Mandarin remarked, "Sire, they must, indeed, have been greater simpletons than the Babies of Bahlistan!"

"The Babies of Bahlistan!" exclaimed the Prince. "Good Mandarin, introduce us to them at once. We long to make their acquaintance"

The other Mandarins joined the Prince in his request, and the Mandarin told the story as follows:—

The Babies of Bahlistan.

In a certain country, not far from the Celestial Empire, there was a province called Bahlistan, where lived a tribe of men, who were so simple-minded and innocent, that the people of the adjacent provinces called them, in derision, the Babies of Bahlistan.

The Babies lived by agriculture, which they conducted by the aid of money borrowed from the usurers of the adjacent provinces. The usurers found it so profitable to deal with the Babies, that they advanced to them any amount they required, and were generally repaid threefold, and sometimes even fourfold, when the harvests were over. Among these usurers there was a merchant named Dalal,

who had grown extremely wealthy by dealing with the Babies.

When they came to borrow money from him, Dalal generally gave them a treat, and conducted them over the halls and corridors of his mansion, that they might be better impressed with his wealth and magnificence, although he gave out to people that he did so out of kindly feelings. The Babies, who were rough and ingenuous men, would admire the sights displayed to their view, and borrow more money than ever from their benefactor.

Dalal was also a sort of universal agent and purveyor for the Babies. If they wanted a spade, he had it made. If they wanted a broom or mop, it went out from his shop. In this style everything went on well between Dalal and his victims till a certain year, when the harvest in Bahlistan proved a total failure, and the Babies were reduced to the verge of absolute poverty and misery.

They flocked round the mansion of Dalal and solicited his aid. He said, "Your harvest this year has failed totally. Well, it may similarly fail next year also. Am I to lose on your account? No. Therefore, I not only advance no money to you this year, but proceed instantly against you in the Courts of Law, that what chattels yet remain with you may cover the debt you owe me, at least, to some extent."

The Babies, with tears trickling down their bushy whiskers, said, "Ah, Dalal, we have paid you interest at a hundred per cent., at two hundred per cent., at three hundred per cent., and on some occasions at four hundred per cent. If we had but a tenth of the money we paid as interest, we shall be able to live comfortably with our families and children, even if the harvest should fail for a dozen years. Do, therefore, pity our present condition and help us."

But Dalal was inexorable; for, as his neighbours observed, there was as much feeling and tenderness in his heart as in an iron-mine. So, by the time the Babies went home, the officers of justice were at their doors, and when the Babies entered their homes the officers entered with them, and turned everything upside down.

The Babies were utterly incapable of cunning; yet the pressure of circumstances sharpened the wits of one of them, named Jumbilar, and he said to his brethren, "Friends, till this moment we have been the victims of our own folly. Now let us learn a lesson which will serve us well in future. Mind, we shall all be utterly ruined if you do not take my advice."

The Babies flocked round Jumbilar, and said, "Brother Jumbilar, anything in this exigency that is likely to serve us is welcome."

Jumbilar said, "Leave everything to me, and when people put on a question about anything, however trifling it may be, say—'Ask Jumbilar.'" They consented with pleasure to this proposal.

Instantly Jumbilar said to the officers of justice, "We have just received news of an unexpected turn of good fortune. If you call again the day after to-morrow, you will not only see the demands of justice satisfied, but get a purse of gold in recognition of your forbearance on this occasion."

The officers of justice were puzzled when they heard the latter part of Jumbilar's speech, and went home in suspense, some of them remarking, "Well, if the ends of justice as well as our own ends are to be satisfied, there is no reason why we should not wait."

Jumbilar, with all the Babies, went to Dalal, and said, "Good friend Dalal, on second thoughts, your apprehensions about the safety of your advances appeared to us but just.

REESE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY

In every civilised community the rights of property should be guarded by all legitimate means; so we entertain no discontent against you on that score. Now, as good luck would have it, a great treasure-trove has turned up in one of our fields."

Dalal, in his eagerness to hear all about it, exclaimed, "Ah, let us know all about it; you cannot communicate it to a better friend and benefactor."

Jumbilar continued, "It consists of innumerable nuggets of gold, which have to be dug out. This business needs a great many implements and a very large sum of money to pay the workmen. Will you supply us with all these things at once? Further, there ought to be no deed or document bearing on the subject. For, should the Sultan know of it, we will not have a dinar out of it."

The greed of Dalal being excited to an inordinate extent, he opened his mouth wide enough to reach his ears, and asked each of the Babies, in whose honesty he had unbounded confidence, if he agreed to pay interest on the money advanced at five hundred per cent. in the shape of the solid nuggets of gold.

Of course each Baby said, "Ask Jumbilar."

Jumbilar agreed to pay accordingly, expressing his regret that Dalal contented himself with five hundred per cent., when the Babies had so much in their possession to give.

Instantly Dalal ordered the implements and the money. The Babies went home with the implements and the money, of which Jumbilar had the lion's share, and soon retrieved their fortunes. Of course they gave no more thought to the nuggets, which Jumbilar said lay buried somewhere in their fields; for they found none, although they had ploughed deep every inch of them.

Dalal, who had implicit faith in the honesty of the Babies of Bahlistan, waited long patiently. He had also

made a special kind of chest to contain the nuggets, and as he opened the empty chest every hour, to see how it would look when filled with the brilliant nuggets, it seemed to cry out, "Oh, where are the nuggets! When will they come!"

So Dalal went to Bahlistan, and asked each of the Babies for the gold.

Each said, "Ask Jumbilar."

So he went to Jumbilar. But Jumbilar put three of the fingers of his right hand, in the form of a trident, on his own forehead, and stood silent.

'JUMBILAR PUT THREE OF HIS FINGERS . . . . ON HIS OWN FOREHEAD."

"Ah, what is the matter with my friend Jumbilar?" said the usurer, turning to the Babies, fancying that something had gone wrong with the wits of the man.

To this query also the Babies gave the inveterate reply, "Ask Jumbilar."

But as Jumbilar spoke not, and the Babies made the same reference over and over again, and as there was neither deed nor document in the bargain, poor Dalal returned saying, "Ah, they are Babies no more, but shrewd men, whose cunning cannot be easily construed; for the

symbols with which Jumbilar replied to my queries are, I daresay, indications of deceit. I shall have nothing to do with these men any more."

The Babies borrowed no more money from the usurer, but saved enough every year to help them in conducting their operations. They asked Jumbilar what he meant by the symbol of the trident. He replied, "When I held up the three fingers, two others were down as you saw. I meant simply that we had grown thrice as cunning as he was, and that he and his cupidity must go down before us, like the two fingers."

Ever after the Babies of Bahlistan acquired the name of the Shrewd Men of Bahlistan, and gave birth to a saying to this effect:—"The very babies of Bahlistan will take to cunning, when driven to it."

The Prince observed, "Well, if the Babies had been self-reliant from the beginning, there would have been no occasion for Dalal to deprive them of so much of their wealth. A man must ever remember that the best master he has is Heaven, and the best servant he has is himself."

Here another Mandarin said, "Sire, if a man would only take pains to do so, he will find all the elements of prosperity in the talents which Heaven has bestowed on him. In fact, he will find them all in his own head and heart, even as the surly farmer found a son-in-law under his own roof, after going round the whole country in quest of one.

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Story of the Surly Farmer and the Boy Pandaram.

In a certain village in the country of Behar, where the holy religion of Buddha first flourished, there was an orphan boy named Pandaram, who for a long time struggled to make a living with great difficulty. Being desirous of improving his circumstances, he went to a philosopher in that neighbourhood, and asked him for help.

"HE WAS VERY ANGRY."

The philosopher had no money, for, as everybody knows, there was scarcely any philosopher who was ever rich—poetry, philosophy, and poverty being counted sisters born of the same parents; but he had wisdom. So he wrote down on a palm-leaf these words:—Patience, perseverance, and perfect happiness; and gave it to Pandaram.

With this leaf in hand, Pandaram went to a surly farmer in the village, and asked him for help.

He was very angry, and said, "If you show your face at

this door again, you will have a bucket of cold water thrown at it!"

When Pandaram heard this polite and encouraging admonition, he looked into the leaf, and read the first word, "Patience." So he patiently put up with the words of the farmer, and every day showed his face at his threshold.

When Pandaram had done this for a month or so, the farmer said, "Now tell me if you know how to plough."

Pandaram said he did not know, but that if he tried he could. So the surly farmer gave him ploughing work in his fields, observing, "If you aspire for more, you will be made as destitute as you were before."

Pandaram now looked into the palm-leaf and found the word "Perseverance;" so he persevered, and in the course of a few months became such an expert ploughman, that the farmer, who had long been in quest of an agent to look after some of his lands, promoted Pandaram to the place, saying. "If you aspire for more, you will be a ploughboy as before."

Pandaram persevered in this also. He took special care to see that the lands entrusted to his charge were well-tilled and manured. So, when the harvest season came, the lands of Pandaram yielded more than the lands farmed by his master; so that the wife of the surly farmer said, "Good husband, let Pandaram look after your lands next year, that they may prove as productive as those already entrusted to his care."

The surly farmer was very glad at heart that Pandaram was coming up so well. But yet, as he had a quaint way of concealing his gratification behind the veil of harsh speech, he said, "So this Pandaram is such a great man in farming as to be considered superior to his master by the very wife of that master. Let us see how he acquits himself in his new charge."

So the farmer entrusted to his care his other lands also,

In his new charge, Pandaram worked with such patience and perseverance that the farmer, who had been indebted to others, paid off all his debts, and had a surplus.

When people in that part of the world get a surplus, they generally think of marrying their children, however youthful they may be. The surly farmer had an only daughter, whom he had long intended to marry to some youth in the village, or its neighbourhood. The surplus gave his project a fresh impetus. So he went about the village in quest of a son-in-law.

A number of young men fell in his way; but to each of them he had some insuperable objection. So he returned home, and told his wife that he had been all round the village without finding a suitable son-in-law. His wife said, "Good husband, I have a proposal to make."

"Do make it at once," said the surly farmer, who had shouldered his wallet to start again in quest of a son-in-law in some neighbouring village.

The wife said, "What if we bestow our daughter on Pandaram?"

"That shall never be!" said the surly farmer, and went out prepared for a long journey in quest of a son-in-law.

There was hardly a village in the country of Behar in which he had not inquired for a youth who would suit him; for he took it for granted that if the youth suited him, he would suit everybody else, including his wife and his daughter. But every one was below the mark. What was more surprising not one of them came up to the level of Pandaram in any respect.

So the surly farmer returned to his village, and told his wife that after all they had to bestow their daughter on the orphan youth Pandaram. Then he addressed Pandaram as follows:—"What settlement do you propose making for the benefit of your wife?"

Pandaram gave no reply; but placed before the farmer with great ceremony a plate, on which was the palm leaf which the philosopher had given him, painted yellow—the colour which was considered most auspicious in that part of the world.

The farmer read the words on the leaf, bestowed his daughter on Pandaram, and made him the real manager of all his concerns. The farmer and his wife led a quiet life thereafter in happy retirement. Pandaram eventually became a great landholder of Behar, and whenever people asked him by what means he had attained his greatness, he would repeat the words of the philosopher, Patience, perseverance, and perfect happiness.

The Prince said, "Perseverance in a good cause, indeed, leads to happiness."

Another Mandarin remarked, "Sire, if people persevere in a bad cause, they may be equally sure of coming to grief some day, like the turbulent citizens of Shanghae."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded to tell it as follows:—

The Turbulent Citizens of Shanghae.

Among the innabitants of the city of Shanghae there were, at one time, two rival factions, who constantly quarrelled with each other. Each had its representative council; each had its festivals and processions, with banners and music; each had its armies of roughs and unprincipled men to annoy the other; while both gave a world of trouble to the Mandarin who governed the city.

The device on the banner of one party was a white dog, while the other faction gloried in having a black dog. So

the two factions were known as the Black Dogs and the White Dogs in popular phrase. Whenever the rival processions met in the streets, the rabble gathered round them, exclaiming, "The Black Dogs and the White Dogs have met. Now they fight. What a splendid sight!"

The ringleaders in these civic disturbances were some of the leading merchants of the city. The Mandarin often sent for them, and said, "You are men of education, wealth, and position. If you do not see that your less educated dependents and followers behave properly, but incite them to riot, it will be utterly impossible to preserve order in the city. Further, the matter has already reached the imperial ears, and I am sure rigorous measures will be adopted to quell your turbulence."

On such occasions the Black Dogs would tell the Mandarin, "Ah, but for the White Dogs, there would be no riot whatever in the streets of Shanghae."

The White Dogs would invariably reply, "But for the Black Dogs, a stranger coming into the city might ask if it was inhabited."

Of course the White Dogs meant that they, for their part, were so silent and peaceful.

The Mandarin being tired of frequently expostulating with these people, pondered over the subject within himself, and one day, summoning the two Dogs before him, said, "The Emperor has received a request from a foreign potentate that the merchants of this city should be permitted to sell to him silken stuffs, of which there are great quantities in your warehouses. The agent is shortly expected at this port, in a yellow junk. Will you prepare to transact business with him?"

The merchants readily consented, and prepared to meet the agent who was expected in the yellow junk. One morning, as the sun appeared in the east, the yellow junk

appeared in the harbour. The merchants were in high spirits at the thought of the enormous profits they expected to make. So they put their wares in a great many boats and rowed to the junk.

The agent of the foreign potentate received them with great attention, and fell to bargaining about the prices of the different kinds of stuffs.

While the merchants were thus engaged, the captain of the junk ordered the anchor to be weighed. The Black Dogs said that the captain wished to take the junk nearer to the shore. The White Dogs said that the captain wished to go farther away from the shore. While they were thus contending again on this subject, with all their traditional animosity and vehemence, the junk had left the harbour, and sailed some distance into the sea.

When all chances of escape were cut off, the captain addressed the merchants as follows:—"Under the command of the Imperial Court at Pekin, the captain of the Yellow Junk gives his compliments to the Black Dogs and the White Dogs that long disturbed the peace of Shanghae, and hereby informs them that they will be transported in this good vessel—the Yellow Junk—to a distant island, where they will be left to fight it out without annoying the people of their native city any more!"

The Black Dogs and the White Dogs perceived, when it was too late, the trap that had been set by the Mandarin to catch them all at one and the same time. So, for the first time in their lives, the two Dogs united and addressed the captain as follows:—"You have a wife like us; you have children like us. You know the pangs of being separated from them too well to need explanation. If you will land us quietly in some out-of-the-way portion of the coast, and sail away, we will reach Shanghae at dead of night, and shut ourselves up with our families—no more music, no

more processions, no more banners, no more festivals, no more dog-devices, no more quarrels and disturbances!"

But the captain was inexorable. So they were eventually landed on the shores of the distant island from which they never returned.

The Black Dogs and White Dogs that yet remained in Shanghae, having lost their leaders and in such an abrupt style, dreaded a similar fate to themselves, and settled down to a life of mutual goodwill and friendship.

The Mandarin, who for a long time had not enjoyed the luxury of a quiet wink of sleep during the nights—for the processions of the two Dogs were conducted generally at a late hour after dark—laid his head peacefully on the pillow as he went to bed, saying, "Ah, the Black Dogs and the White Dogs will howl no more in the streets of Shanghae at dead of night!"

The Prince remarked, "After all the captain of the Yellow Junk enabled the Mandarin of Shanghae to surmount the difficulty."

Here another Mandarin got up, and saluting the Prince, said, "Sire, even as the Truant in a Triple Guise enabled the Sultan to surmount a difficulty which his astrologers had thrown in the way of his daughter's marriage."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to narrate the story, and he proceeded as follows:—

The Truant in a Triple Guise.

There was a Sultan of Samarcand, who had a daughter, at whose birth the astrologers said, "She will wed a physician, a fisherman, and a prince."

On being asked by the Sultan whether she would marry

the three husbands one after the other, as death cleared the way, or at one and the same time, the astrologers said, "Oh, Sultan, it is written in the book of fate that she should marry them at one and the same time—a Prince with a scimitar, a Fisherman with a net, and a Physician with a bag of medicines."

The Sultan said, "Why, it would be simply monstrous if my daughter did so. So let her live in celibacy and in strict confinement all her life."

Accordingly, the princess was shut up in a fortress close to the capital. His Majesty also issued a proclamation to the effect that neither physicians, nor fishermen, nor princes should be permitted to step into his dominions; that all people who belonged to these three orders should at once evacuate it; that the Princess should be kept in utter ignorance of the three, and that everybody who ventured to utter audibly any one of the terms Physic, Fish, and Prince, should be at once led to the block and have his head cut off.

There was a Genius in the castle in which the Princess was confined, who said to himself, "The Sultan has issued a cruel edict. The princes and physicians are indeed a handful, when compared with the fishermen in the country. These have been deprived of their living, while those have left the country and have been shifting for themselves somehow in foreign lands. Further, the Sultan's mandate is to the effect that no fish shall ever be served at the table of the Princess, and that none shall be taken into the castle. This is depriving the Princess of one of the most wholesome delicacies of the table. When men err, higher powers ought to set them right. So I must do my duty in this instance."

With this resolve, the Genius approached the Princess invisibly, and whispered into her ears, "Fish!"

The Princess had never heard the name before, so she asked her maids what the name meant. They said that it

was as much as their life was worth, and that they should be excused. But the Princess was very sorry that she could not find out the meaning of the term, so she neither ate nor drank, nor dressed nor played, but pined away day by day, crying "Fish!" and sobbing at intervals in a most piteous fashion.

The Sultan came to know of it. He said to himself, "Nobody, I am sure, spoke to the Princess of the three terms; yet she utters one of them, which may be a clue to the rest for aught we know. Her cruel destiny seems to have revealed the term to her. But yet I must contend against it."

Accordingly he tried his best to make his daughter forget the term; but the more he endeavoured to do so, the oftener she repeated it.

So he issued another proclamation, saying, "He that frees our daughter from the delusion under which she has been labouring will have a high reward, provided he is neither a physician, nor a fisherman, nor a prince."

When the Genius heard this proclamation, he said, "Well, that is a wise Sultan after all!" and going to a prince named Bakeer—who was a nephew of his Majesty, and who had been expelled from his court as a mischievous truant and traitor, because he often loitered by the castle where the Princess was confined to obtain a sight of her if possible—and said, "Now, put on a triple guise, one over another, so that you may appear a physician with all three, a fisherman with two, and a prince with one."

Bakeer did so. Then the Genius gave him a bag containing a parcel of medicines, a net with three large fishes in it, and a scimitar of exquisite workmanship, and transported him to the apartments of the Princess in the castle, saying, "Now, court the Princess, and win her heart before the Sultan can know of your arrival here. Take out

the parcel of medicines first, then the fishes with the net containing them, then the scimitar, and show them all to the Princess; for each of them has a rare charm of love in it, which will help you wonderfully in your suit."

Having thus introduced Bakeer into the apartments of the Princess, the Genius approached the Sultan invisibly,

A PHYSICIAN . . . TALKING TO THE PRINCESS" (*p.* 107).

and whispered into his ears, "O, Sultan, the person that is to free your daughter from the delusion has arrived at the castle. He is this moment talking to the Princess. What are you doing here!"

The Sultan was pleased to hear from the invisible person that his daughter was likely to be freed from the delusion; but at the same time he was enraged to see that the man had gone to her without his permission.

So he sent for the Grand Vizier and said, "Let every one

of the guards who watch round the fortress be sent to prison for having let a man in, who is to treat the Princess, without our permission."

But when the Grand Vizier questioned the guards about it, they swore nobody had entered the castle.

The Sultan hastened therefore, with drawn scimitar, to examine the apartments of the Princess personally.

When he went in he was astonished to see a physician, with a parcel of medicines, talking to the Princess, evincing great affection and esteem for her. The Sultan ran towards him with uplifted scimitar, exclaiming, "This is a villainous physician, indeed, with his perilous parcel of medicines."

Instantly Bakeer ran into an opposite room. Before the Sultan could enter the room, the invisible Genius whispered into the ears of Bakeer, "Now, throw off the physician's clothes and parcel, and take up the net with the fishes in it."

Bakeer did so in the twinkling of an eye.

So, when the Sultan entered the room, he found a fisherman there, and exclaimed, "Ah, here is a villainous fisherman, with his perilous net and fish!" and ran towards him with uplifted scimitar.

Bakeer ran into another room. The invisible Genius whispered into his ears, "Throw off the fisherman's clothes and net, and, taking up the scimitar in the bag, boldly resist the Sultan."

Bakeer did so in the twinkling of an eye.

So, when the Sultan entered the room, he found a prince there, and exclaimed, "Ah, here is a villainous prince, with his perilous scimitar!" and ran towards him, muttering to himself, "So my daughter has actually proved a monster. She has had three husbands, at one and the same time, concealed in her apartments! The astrologers have proved true, after all!"

But Bakeer, instead of fleeing into another room, met the Sultan face to face. Finding a great resemblance between him and his nephew, the Sultan stood silent for one moment.

The invisible Genius whispered into the ears of Bakeer, "Now, put your two other disguises before the Sultan—forget not the parcel of medicines and the net with the three fishes in it."

Bakeer did so in the twinkling of an eye.

His Majesty exclaimed, "Ah, Bakeer, is it you—physician, fisherman, and prince in one? So you are the truant, in a triple guise, again! But have you freed my daughter from her delusion?"

"Long ago, sire," said Bakeer, smiling.

Here the Princess came out, and said, "Sire, I am now quite free from delusion, and feel much better than ever before in my life!"

"I am, indeed, happy to hear of it," said the Sultan, and united the hands of Bakeer and his daughter, observing to himself, "After all, she has found three husbands in one, and blame attaches to none!"

The Prince observed, "The invisible Genius played a double part. He appeared to be the friend of the Sultan when he informed him of the presence of the Prince in the castle, while all the while he was favouring the Prince."

Here another Mandarin got up, and said, "Sire, like the boy Padang in the Valley of the Hundred Giants, it is often necessary to play a double part for the public weal."

The Prince asked the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Boy Padang and the Hundred Giants.

In a valley at a great distance from the city of Amarapura, in the Kingdom of Burmah, there lived a hundred giants, who were "tall as the cocoa palm, and round like a boulder." Each had a huge club in his hand. There was this fatal peculiarity about them—if they went out in the rain, they were sure to fall down dead. Therefore, during the summer months, they scoured the plains with their huge clubs, and seizing as many people as came in their way, returned to the valley, where they spent the rainy months in feasting.

Further, the giants loved one another very tenderly, and if any of them suffered any injury, all the rest felt it. Many people, therefore, fancied they were one hundred brothers, living in perfect concord. But, in spite of their brotherly love towards one another, as they treated the people in the plains with great cruelty, the people were bent upon working their ruin.

They often said to themselves, in despair, "We are men; they are giants. With one sweep of his club, a giant knocks down a thousand among us. How can we destroy them?"

There was a poor widow in the city, who had an only son, named Padang. He was a little boy, that had not his right arm. People might fancy that a boy who had only one arm would have kept quiet, without doing any mischief whatever, brooding over the misfortune that had befallen him in the loss of the other arm. But Padang was of a different type. He went about the streets of the city collecting a great many boys around him, and setting them on to all kinds of mad frolics and tricks.

This annoyed the townspeople greatly. So they said to

the widow, "If you do not take proper care of your boy, and keep him within doors, we will send him off to the Valley of the One Hundred Giants."

Padang, who had just then returned from one of his raids in the city, heard this, and said, "It will do you good to send me to the valley. Tell the King I wish to go at once."

When his Majesty was informed of this, he ordered Padang to leave the city at once for the Valley of the One Hundred Giants.

Padang said to his mother, "Give me as much bread and water as will last for seven days, and put in the bag some flint and steel. I am going to the Valley of the Giants.

His mother tried her best to keep him from the enterprise, as he was her only son. But he was resolute. So, with tears in her eyes, the poor widow gave him the bread and water, together with the flint and steel in a bag.

After a long journey, Padang reached the valley, and stood at the mouth of the cave in which the giants lived.

They saw him with surprise, and said, "Well, little fellow, with a single hand, who are you?"

Padang replied, "Well, tall fellows, with two hands, I am an old friend of your great-grandfather."

The giants said, "Good! What is your name?"

Padang replied, "Padang, the single-handed."

The giants said, "Good! You say you are an old friend of our great-grandfather—how old are you?"

Padang said, "Ah, that I can't say. I remember when this cavern, in which you live, was built by your great-grandfather, compared with whom you are but pigmies. I was then by his side, and helped him in lifting up the huge rocks. One of them fell on my hand, and broke it."

The giants said, "If you assisted our great-grandfather

"PADANG . . . STOOD AT THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE" (*p.* 110

in building this cave, you must have been present when it was furnished, and you ought to know why it was not carpeted, in spite of the ground being so rough."

Padang said, "Ah, your ancestors never complained of the ruggedness of the floor; it was nothing to them. But you have degenerated, and so you feel it. But would you have it carpeted?"

"Certainly," said the giants.

Padang bade them bring a great quantity of dried grass from the mountains, and spread it on the floor. Then he bade them bring the naphtha in a great well in the mountains, and pour it over the grass, saying, "It will make it smooth and glossy."

The giants were very glad to see the carpet of dried grass and naphtha.

They treated Padang with the respect due to an old friend of their grandfather, who had also lost an arm in building the cave which was their mansion, and he waited patiently, saying, "The seventh day since I left home is yet to come. It ought to rain some day in seven days."

Accordingly, it began to rain very hard one evening.

The giants sat down to dinner in great glee. While they were carousing, Padang came to the mouth of the cave, and, striking a light with the flint and steel in his bag, set fire to the carpet.

The naphtha helped the grass to burn quickly, and the suffocating smoke, mingled with the flames, drove the giants out of the cave into the open air, where the rain killed them all.

Padang collected the one hundred clubs of the Giants, and returning to Amarapura, laid them before the King, saying, "I am sure your Majesty knows whose clubs these are."

The King knew they belonged to the giants, and that they must all have perished.

Padang gave him an account of his adventure, as his Majesty was eager to know all about it.

His Majesty was very glad to see that the hundred giants had been destroyed by Padang, so he bestowed on him the hand of his only daughter, and presented him with a great golden umbrella, which was a high honour at the court of Amarapura.

His mother had apartments in the palace.

His Majesty also issued a proclamation, to the effect that before all his other royal titles, proper to be used whenever his Majesty was mentioned, he should be called the Father-in-law of Padang, the Single-handed, the Lord of the Golden Umbrella, and the Destroyer of the One Hundred Giants in the great Valley, at a great distance from Amarapura, in the kingdom of Burmah.

The Prince said, "The giants met with ruin because they sought a luxury which their great-grandfather had not."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, the giants fancied it was simply carpeting the floor; but very serious consequences followed from it, even as from the endeavours of the man Neph, who lived on the banks of the Sanpo, and who amused himself by fishing in the streets."

"Fishing in the streets," said the Prince; "why, that must have been a curious operation, indeed! Good Mandarin, tell us how Neph fished in the streets."

The Mandarin told the story as follows :—

Fishing in the Streets.

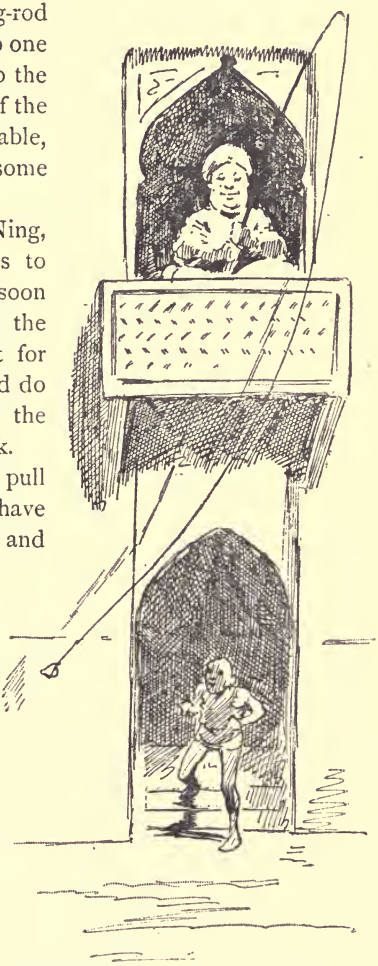
In an ancient city, on the banks of the Sanpo, there was a wealthy man named Neph, who was passionately fond of the amusement of fishing. But, at the same time, his luxurious habits had made him so fat and unwieldy that he

had neither the power nor the inclination to stir out of his house, so he would sit at the window of his chamber, facing the street, with a fishing-rod and a long line attached to one end of it, and throw it into the street. To the other end of the string was attached some eatable, as a piece of bread, or some fruit.

He had a boy named Ning, whose special duty it was to run out into the street as soon as his master had thrown the line, and keep pulling it for awhile, just as a fish would do in its endeavours to catch the bait, and then give it a jerk.

Neph would instantly pull up the string, saying, "I have got the fish, my boy!" and give the eatable to Ning, who put it into his mouth, and rushed into the street to amuse his master again.

The friends of the fat man long endeavoured to take him out into the open air, observing that, by his luxurious living, and sedentary habits, he was marching towards his grave with rapid strides.



"HE WOULD SIT . . WITH A FISHING ROD.

But he would say, "Well, my only amusement out of doors would be fishing. Now, the real sport in fishing consists in throwing down the line and pulling it up. I have it at home. My endeavours to amuse myself at home being so far successful, there is no reason why I should go out—so be so good as to leave me to myself."

They would reply, "Ah, Neph, your endeavours to amuse yourself in this style may lead to serious consequences!" So he acquired the name of Fat Neph among his neighbours, some of whom called him the idlest man on the banks of the Sanpo.

Neph was an old bachelor. He did not wish to take a wife, because he said he could get on very well without one. But the true reason that Neph had for not marrying was to save the expense of getting a wife, and keeping her, for Neph was a miser, although he spent much for a good table.

In the house opposite to the one in which he lived there was a lady, who had long conceived the idea of marrying Neph some day, saying, "I will first reduce his bulk, and then make him happy."

She waited for an opportunity to meet him, but as he neither went out of his house, nor admitted ladies into it, she came up to Ning one evening, as he was about to give the string a jerk, and, snatching the eatable, put it into her own mouth, saying, "Well, Ning, if your master should ask who caught the bait, say 'a fish with jet-black hair,' and nothing more, till you see us together, will you? there's a good boy," and, putting a piece of money into his hand, disappeared.

When Fat Neph pulled up the string he found the bait had disappeared.

"Now, my boy," said Neph, "you have grown extremely greedy. You would not wait till I gave you the fish to eat."

"I did not eat it, sir," said Ning.

"Who did eat it, then?" said Neph.

"It was a fish with jet-black hair, sir," said Ning.

"Ah," said Neph to himself, pondering over the subject, "I see how it was. Some fair spirit who has long admired my endeavours to amuse myself by fishing steadily in the street has done it."

Then he thought of the many gods and goddesses described in some of the books of the Lamas or Priests of Thibet, and came to the conclusion that it was a spirit resembling one of them in shape.

Now there was a long-winded proverb, with a hyperbolical conclusion, along the banks of the Sanpo, which said, "Love smites the fat man, love smites the lean man; love smites the tall man, love smites the short man; love smites the young, loves smites the old; love smites the living, love smites the dead; so be a man fat or lean, giant or dwarf, young or old, living or dead, against love he can never hope to hold up his head."

Fat Neph had long wondered what this proverb meant, but now his doubts were cleared; for he fell desperately in love with the fish with jet-black hair, and rushed out of his house to see which way it had gone.

This was the first instance for many years when he crossed the street door. But as he could not decide which way the fish had gone, he said to himself, "Fish, and spirits resembling fish, must dwell in the river. So I will go to the Sanpo and seek for this fish."

So with difficulty, he walked up to the banks of the Sanpo, and strolled up and down in quest of the fish. But not finding it there, returned home with a heavy heart.

The next day, while he was fishing from the window, the lady caught the bait in the same style, unperceived by Neph, and Ning told the same tale.

Neph went out to the banks of the Sanpo with the same eagerness, and returned disappointed, as on the previous day.

The lady played this for one year. During this period, Neph had the amount of exercise necessary to reduce his bulk, and infuse quite a different spirit into him.

On the evening of the last day of the year, Neph, as he strolled on the banks of the river, said to himself, "Well, this is strange—that the fish should seize the bait every day, and persistently disappear before I could come out. How shall I find it out?"

Just then a boat approached the spot where Neph stood, and a fair lady landed from it. She had jet-black hair.

"Perhaps," said Neph to himself, "the fish has hair like this lady," and calling to Ning, who was close by, asked, "Had the fish hair like this lady, my boy?"

Ning replied, "This lady is the fish, sir."

Here the lady came up to Neph, and said, "Ning is quite right."

"Ah, Ning," said Neph, "you might have told me this long before."

"No, sir," said the mischievous little Ning, "I was requested not to tell you who the fish was till I saw you together."

"Well, well, Ning," said his master impatiently, taking the lady by the hand, "when next a fish of the kind catches the bait, you will tell me at once, won't you?"

Ning promised to do so without failure.

Fat Neph soon acquired the name of Lean Neph, and from an old bachelor he turned into a young husband, and lived happily with his wife, whom he persistently called The Fish with the Jet-black Hair.

As his master's endeavours to amuse himself had led to such serious consequences, Ning had not to run into

the street any more, for he was told once for all that the fish had been caught for which they had been angling for one whole year.

The Prince remarked that the lady after all did Neph a world of good by her stratagem.

Here another Mandarin stood up and said, "By such clever devices, no doubt a world of good may be done to people, even as Kaploth Guni of Canton did to the boys of the city, the animals living therein, and the Mandarin who was long concerned about them."

The Prince asked for the story, which the Mandarin related as follows :—

Kaploth Guni of Canton.

In the city of Canton, there was a person named Kaploth Guni, whom some people called a wise man, and others a mad beggar. If he was mad he had, of course, his lucid intervals. In these, he was very fond of telling little people all kinds of stories about fairies, genii, goblins, and giants, in the existence of all of which he said he fully believed.

When he was mad he did nobody any harm, but sat quietly under a great tree, at some distance from the city, and ate what his little friends brought him, saying, "Poor Guni, who will help him if we neglect him?"

The Mandarin of Canton heard of the great influence which Guni exercised over the minds of the children of the city. He came to Guni, as he sat under the tree, and said, "Kaploth Guni, are you really mad, as people say? If really you are subject to fits of insanity, it strikes me you are sober when you tell your tales, and mad when you sit quiet and moody."

Kaploth Guni said, "Good Mandarin. If so, I am mad when I am sober, and sober when I am mad!"

The Mandarin said, "You may take a wild buffalo by its horns, but not a paradox by its words. So, unless you explain yourself, I cannot understand you."

Guni said, "Prattling is madness; silence is wisdom. So I am mad when you think I am sober, and sober when you think I am mad."

This remark of Kaploth Guni puzzled the Mandarin. At the same time it impressed him with the idea that Kaploth Guni had a great deal of hidden wisdom in him. So he said, "Guni, the boys and girls of Canton have grown very troublesome. They constantly pelt stones at birds and break the windows of houses. I have sent round the watchman and the town crier with gongs and threatening proclamations; but they care not. You have been a kind of moral watchman to them. Will you try to stop the evil?"

Guni promised to do so.

The next day, when the children came to see him, they said, "Good Guni, you speak of the fairies that live in flowers, the gins that live under the earth, the goblins that ride on whirlwinds, and the giants that come down from their caves in the mountains with huge clubs; well, we like them all very much. They are, indeed, wonderful people. May we see them some day?"

Guni replied, "If you wish to see them, you must go to the world in which they live. There is but one animal that knows the way to that world."

"Ah, which is the animal, good Guni?" asked the children eagerly.

Guni said, "Well, this animal is a bird—through its nest lies the way to the world of the wonderful people. If this bird should perish the clue will be utterly lost."

"What kind of a bird was it?" was the next question.

Guni replied, "It is a raven, with one wing broken."

The children said, "We see a raven every day; so we do not think that you mean what you say."

Guni said, "I beg your pardon. I forgot to tell you that the raven has a bill of gold, and claws of adamant."

"Ah, it must be a pretty little bird!" said the children

"Indeed, it is!" said Guni.

One of the children asked, "Good Guni, how did the poor raven break its wing?"

All the rest joined in the demand, saying, "How did the poor raven, with the bill of gold, and claws of adamant, through whose nest lies the way to the world of the wonderful people, break its wing?"

"Well," said Guni, "There is a boy in Canton named Hing——" Here Guni paused.

The children cried, "Do tell us what he did to the raven, Guni!"

Guni continued, "Well, this boy is very fond of pelting stones at ravens and other birds. One of the stones he threw broke the wing of the raven."

The children cried, "We will not see his face hereafter. We will not pronounce the name Hing any more!"

"But," said Guni, "Have you not thrown stones at ravens yourselves? Why do you find fault with him?"

"But," said the children, "we never broke the wing of a raven with a beautiful bill of gold and brilliant claws of adamant; nor ever will."

Guni said, "Good. I must communicate to you another fact. This raven at times goes out like an ordinary raven, concealing its golden bill and claws of adamant."

"If so," cried the children, "we will take care not to throw stones at any raven hereafter."

"Good," said Kaploth Guni.

So, for some days, the boys and girls of Canton, who came to hear of the wonderful raven, threw no stones at ravens.

Then, when the children went to see him on another day, Kaploth Guni said, "I have just received news that the raven at times goes out in the form of any bird, and lays its eggs in any nest it likes."

Instantly the children made a rule among themselves that they should pelt no stones at any bird, or take the eggs out of any nest thereafter.

When all this had transpired, the Mandarin said, "Good Kaploth Guni, the evil has assumed another shape. The boys and girls of Canton now throw stones at the dogs, cats, and other animals, and worry them extremely."

The next day, when the children came to him, Guni said, "Ah, I had information last night that at times the raven assumes the forms of dogs, cats, and other animals, and goes about the streets of Canton. Till we catch it, and ascertain from it the clue to the world of the wonderful people, we must take care it is not injured."

The children at once desisted from worrying these animals also. Then the children asked Guni when they would be able to see the wonderful people.

Guni said, "I have been trying to catch the wonderful raven. So soon as it comes into my possession, we will get the clue and go through its nest to the world of the wonderful people. In the meanwhile, as I have already said, you must take special care not to hurt any animal; the raven, as you are aware, may go about in any form it likes. If it should be disabled or killed, all our hopes of seeing the wonderful people will be blasted."

Long the boys and girls of Canton hurt no animal, in expectation of catching the wonderful raven with the bill of gold and claws of adamant, through whose nest lay the

route to the world of the wonderful people, and Kaploth Guni told them the same tale whenever they asked him about it.

The Mandarin of Canton was astonished to see the wisdom of Kaploth Guni, which worked such wonders with the boys and girls of the city, and honoured him as his friend and counsellor.

The Prince said, "The wisdom of Kaploth Guni effected a great deal more than all the power of the Mandarin and his subordinates put together."

Another Mandarin stood up and said, "Sire, wisdom can work wonders, even as it did in the case of the Imam of Arabia, who converted No-Date-Land into All-Date-Land, by inducing his people to strive for the attainment of the Elixir of Life."

The Prince expressed an eager desire to hear the story, and the Mandarin related it as follows:—

The Elixir of Life.

There was an Imam who ruled over a certain province of Arabia, the people of which were notorious for their idle and nomadic habits. But the Imam was a very learned and wise man. So he said to himself, "The value of a good ruler is perceived in the results that flow from his rule. My people have long been addicted to wandering from place to place without a settled abode; they have neither wealth nor refinement. I must endeavour to better their condition."

With this resolve, he carefully examined the various traits in the character of his subjects, and found out that a

passion for long life was the most powerful impetus for action among them. So he told them one day, "I saw the prophet last night in a vision. He said he had learnt that my subjects were eager to live long in this world, and that all that they had to do to secure longevity was to find out the Elixir of Life. This, again, the prophet said, would be found, after all, enclosed within a date fruit in this province."

The subjects of the Imam said, "Did the prophet say that the Elixir of Life would be found enclosed in a date fruit of this province, or did he say that it would be found in a date fruit simply? If the latter, we will at once make a raid into any and every province of Arabistan where there are date trees, and find out the particular fruit alluded to by the prophet."

"Alas!" said the Imam, "I am sorry it is not as you have suggested. I remember the prophet distinctly saying a date fruit of this province."

The people said, "There are no date trees in this province at all. In all Araby it is counted the most barren; so much so, that many call it No-Date-Land. But the prophet's word, at the same time, must be true. So, good Imam, do ask the prophet again what his words mean."

The Imam promised to do so.

The next morning the Imam said, "The prophet, with that regard which he ever maintains for the faithful, answered my prayer, and told me, last night, that the date fruit after all will be found in this very province."

"If so," said the people, "we have to cultivate the trees in this province."

"That is exactly what the prophet meant!" said the Imam.

One of the men said, "No date trees will ever grow in our

soil, it is so barren. If any could be grown, they should have been grown long ago."

Instantly the Imam observed, "I forgot to tell you what the prophet said on this point. It would appear that every soil has a certain amount of fecundity for the date tree; that our land has not produced dates from time immemorial; that, therefore, its productiveness has been long conserved, and that the dates we shall produce will be so rich and bulky, that the one which is to contain the Elixir of Life will be found among them."

This argument appeared incontrovertible to every one in the assembly. While they were pondering as to what they were to do next, the Imam with his own hands planted in his garden a date plant, which he had already imported from an adjacent province.

Thereupon, every man said to himself, "Well, longevity is a blessing which, by all means, is worth having. The prophet has said that the Elixir of Life will be found in a date fruit in this province. Who knows in whose garden the tree may grow that is to produce the wonderful date fruit? It may appear, after all, on a tree in my own garden, if I should take the trouble of cultivating it there. Once I get the fruit, not only do I secure to myself great longevity, but I can sell every atom of it for a fabulous sum of money and make mountains of wealth by it. Again, look to the reputation I shall gain. Why, every holy man among the faithful will call me a blessed saint, and crave the favour of my intercession on his behalf with the prophet, who has been pleased to confer such a blessing on me. So let me not neglect the duty I owe to myself in this respect."

With this resolve, every man worked at it. He enclosed a plot of ground, imported the date plant from the surrounding provinces, and cultivated it with such care that in course of time the whole territory was covered with date trees,

whose fruit not only supplied the inhabitants with nutritious food, but gave them a large surplus, which they sold to people of other provinces.

Thus, a brisk trade in the fruit, which soon led to the exportation and importation of sundry other commodities, infused a commercial spirit into the people. With commerce came wealth; with wealth came the arts and sciences. With

"EVERY MAN CULTIVATED IT WITH . . CARE" (*p* 125).

them refinement of tastes and manners, till, after all, travellers passing through No-Date-Land, failed to recognise it as such. In fact, the very name of the province had changed. So many date trees grew on all sides in it, that it came to be known all over Araby as All-Date-Land.

In the midst of all this the people did not forget the promise of the prophet, as they fancied that the Elixir of Life would be found in some date fruit some day in the province.

So they one day surrounded the Imam, and said, "Holy ruler, the blessings that have been showered upon us by your wise and beneficent rule have been incalculable. We were a nomadic tribe, with precarious means of subsistence. But your wisdom has converted us into a little nation of industrious men, with knowledge, wealth, and refinement. We are perfectly happy as we are; yet, as curiosity impels us to ask the question, deign to tell us if the Elixir of Life will actually appear some day in the fruit of our trees."

The Imam replied, "The prophet did not specify the time within which it ought to appear, so persevere to cultivate the date and leave the rest to Providence."

So to this day the people of All-Date-Land are the most industrious and prosperous in Araby. They celebrate once a year a festival in honour of the first planting of the date in the garden of the Imam, which memorable event was the commencement of their prosperity.

The Prince remarked, "Prior to the Imam who converted No-Date-Land into All-Date-Land, there must have been Imams equally wise, but they had not resolved to ameliorate the condition of their subjects as this good Imam did."

Here another Mandarin stood up and said, "He who resolves to do a thing will often do it, even as the Prince who resolved to obtain the Magic Ruby on the Head of the Serpent, and got it at last, together with the Princess, who had declared her willingness to wed the man who achieved the feat."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to narrate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Magic Ruby on the Head of the Serpent.

In the country of Siam, which was famous for its rubies, there was in ancient times a serpent which was said to have in its head the best ruby in the world. The tradition about the jewel was that a magician who knew all about the properties of these stones once turned over the books that treated about the subject in the occult art, and said to himself, "Ah, here is the formula after all. The best rubies in the world are those that are cultivated in the heads of serpents by the power of magic. If a thousand serpents be chosen and the formula pronounced a thousand times, every one of them begins to bear the crude form of the ruby at once in its head. A thousand years after, some one of them will survive. That one will bear in its head the most precious ruby in the world."

The magician, counting upon living a thousand years, selected in his imagination a thousand serpents, and infused the ruby principle, as he called it, into the head of each, by the magic formula. But before the full period of a thousand years required for the maturing of the gems could elapse, all the serpents but one had perished, and the magician himself went the way of all mortality.

The one surviving serpent lived in the cave of a great mountain far from the capital of the Sultan.

When the sun or moon shone, it never crept out of its den. In the darkest nights the serpent emerged from it, deposited the gem in its head, in the middle of a vast plain near the mountain, and, by the aid of the brilliant red light emitted by it far and wide, went in quest of its prey.

A great many travellers had seen the red glare of the ruby, but not one of them had the courage to approach it. For instantly, they said, the serpent would rush hissing at

them with flaming eyes, and reduced them to a heap of ashes by its fiery gaze.

The kings of the country had long been eager to possess this ruby. But as the difficulties in the way of getting at it were almost insurmountable, they had died without accomplishing the object, till it came to the turn of a king who had an only child—a daughter—to strive to obtain the gem. The Princess, as the poets of her father's court observed, was fair as the full-blown lotus, and accomplished like the goddess of wisdom. She was called Ratnamala, or Necklace of Gems.

She was so called, not only because she was as beautiful as a necklace of gems, but also because she wore a necklace of the most valuable gems in the world. When she came of age, her mother said to her, "Dear Ratnamala, your father wishes to celebrate your marriage ere long. Confide to me the secret wish of your heart as to the Prince who is to be our son-in-law."

Ratnamala, gracefully holding her necklace in her hand, said, "Dear mother, there are eight large gems in this, which have been called eight planets. If I remember right the planets are nine. So one more gem is wanted to complete the number. That one shall be the brightest yet obtained —the magic ruby in the head of the serpent. He that brings me the gem will be your son-in-law."

The Queen was very sorry that her daughter had set her heart on such a perilous prize.

When the King heard it, he was no less concerned. So he proclaimed throughout his dominions that he would bestow his daughter in marriage on that person who brought him the magic ruby.

In the kingdom of Burmah there was a Prince named Bahubal, who had long been in love with the Princess Ratnamala, although he had never once seen her. He said

to himself, "If I do not marry the Princess Ratnamala, I do not want to live. If I get this gem, I marry her; if not, I perish in the attempt. So I must go in quest of it."

Accordingly, he accoutred himself in mail, with a helmet, which had sharp spikes on it, and rode on in the direction of the mountain in Siam, where the serpent lived.

He alighted at the inn of a village at some distance from the mountain, and asked the landlady what the wonders of the place were.

She said, "Ah, there is a reptile in this neighbourhood, which they have dignified with the name of a serpent. It has a piece of red tinsel in its hood, which they have dignified with the name of a magic ruby. There is the daughter of a Sultan here, who has fallen in love with the valiant unknown who is to fetch her the trinket. If you have a mind to marry her—I have no doubt you deserve her—you may get the ruby."

The Prince asked what the secret of attaining the gem was.

The landlady replied, "The only secret of success is to advance boldly and cover the gem with something on which the serpent may strike its head to death. Of this many are aware, but not one of them will dare. So all that is required is the resolution to do so."

Prince Bahubal thanked the landlady for her valuable information, and when night had set in proceeded to the plain near the mountain, and hid himself in a cluster of rocks. About midnight the serpent came out of its den, hissing in a most hideous fashion, and depositing the ruby at some distance from the spot where Bahubal was, proceeded far in quest of its prey. When it was almost out of sight, Bahubal silently approached the gem, covered it with his helmet, and returning to his hiding-place in the rocks, carefully watched the result.

So soon as the helmet covered the gem it became dark

all round. But, owing to the slightly uneven surface of the plain, a glimpse of light escaped through a small aperture at the bottom of the helmet, which pointed out to the serpent where the gem was. So it returned with great fury, and, raising its head, struck the helmet with it. But the helmet being spiked, the hood of the serpent was pierced through, and in a few moments more it was writhing in agony, hissing in a very hideous style. Soon the hisses subsided, and it lay lifeless on the ground.

"THE SERPENT . . . . RETURNED WITH GREAT FURY."

When the day dawned the Prince came out of his hiding-place, and fastening the gem to his heart with a chain of gold took up the bloody helmet in one hand, and dragging the carcase of the serpent with the other, presented himself at the gates of the capital of the King.

His Majesty received Prince Bahubal with every mark of attention, while the Princess Ratnamala asked why he had fastened the gem to his heart.

Bahubal instantly unloosened the jewel and presented it to the Princess with great courtesy, saying, "That is my heart."

The Princess had from this an idea of the love and devotion of Prince Bahubal towards her, and completing the number of the planets in the necklace, gave her hand in marriage to Prince Bahubal, who rejoiced to say that he had wooed her at the risk of his life, and wedded her, to his great happiness.

The King and Queen were extremely delighted. The people shared in their delight sincerely, and all over the country there were rejoicings in honour of the double event —the acquisition of the Magic Ruby after all by Prince Bahubal, and the marriage of the Prince with fair Ratnamala, who wore the necklace with the nine planets in it—the Magic Ruby emitting its red light in the middle.

The Prince remarked, "The Magic Ruby was the means of uniting the Prince Bahubal and the Princess Ratnamala. Well, it often happens that such strange media bring together kindred souls."

Another Mandarin replied, "Sire, the Magic Ruby united the Prince and the Princess, even as the Yellow Banner brought together the charitable merchant, Le Hoi, of Nankin, and his still more charitable and benevolent wife."

The Prince expressed an eager desire to know all about the Yellow Banner, and the Mandarin told the story as follows:—

The Story of the Yellow Banner.

In the city of Nankin there was a youth named Le Hoi, who had extremely tender feelings and susceptibilities. He could not, as he often said, bear the sight of a butterfly with a broken wing, or a beetle that was ill-treated by wicked children.

When he walked through the streets especially, he carried in his pockets crumbs of bread, and other perquisites from the pantry and the kitchen, and distributed them freely among the hungry dogs and other animals, that had got into the habit of applying to him for aid, whenever they found themselves in his way.

The father of Le Hoi was one of the wealthiest merchants in Nankin; and as he was his only son, he gave him

"HE COULD NOT . . . . BEAR THE SIGHT OF A BUTTERFLY WITH A BROKEN WING" (*p.* 132).

any amount of pocket-money that he required. This Le Hoi generally laid out in relieving the wants of the distressed. If he saw in the streets a child without shoes, or other articles of necessary attire, he took it silently to a shop that sold the articles, and, supplying the want, went his way.

Another great point, which Le Hoi made it a religious duty to observe, was that no third party should know anything of his humane services to the poor.

One day Le Hoi was passing by a place, not far from the great Porcelain tower, in the city of Nankin, when he saw near it a great concourse of people. He mixed with the crowd.

In the centre of a circle formed by the rabble there was a poor little kitten, one of whose legs had been broken by some carriage passing over it, and which was lying in a helpless condition. Every one was amusing himself with its agonies.

One said, "The wily little thing! It appears to be so helpless at present. But if it had been permitted to grow into a great tom-cat, and came to your window of a night with its hideous caterwauling, you would then see it in its true colours. I really thank the man that has disabled the pest so completely."

Another observed, "I hate the cat tribe with all my heart. Look how the monster, with his wily little eyes, feigns weakness. You must let him go near the pail, and see how he would fall to lapping."

Just then a little girl, with a very innocent and amiable face, and eyes full of compassionate tears, approached the helpless animal and held over it a yellow banner, which she had in her hand, to shelter it from the rays of the sun, saying, "I am glad mamma bought me this for a plaything to-day. It helps me to shelter the poor kitten from the rays of the burning sun."

Le Hoi exclaimed, "Ah, here is a ring of all the brutality and wickedness in Nankin, and there, in the centre of it, a true picture of humane sympathy and kindness. The philosophers say that man is compounded of the gods and the demons, and maintain their position by pointing to the world above, which has all the good in it, and the world below, which has all the evil in it, while this intermediate world shares the characters of both. The demons are in the ring, and the gods in the centre in the form of that little sympathetic soul. Why, she is yet a child! and her banner—it is, indeed, the banner of triumphant mercy and benevolence. I wish I knew who she is."

While Le Hoi was thus soliloquising on the scene, a servant of the house from which the kitten had strayed into the streets came up, and, taking it gently in her hands, kissed the girl in recognition of her kindly feelings towards it, and returned home.

Le Hoi hastened to know who the girl was; but, before he could see her, she had disappeared. He spent a long time in the neighbourhood making inquiries about her, but no one seemed to know anything about her.

The tableau of the girl, with the yellow banner held over the helpless kitten, surrounded by all the brutality and wickedness of Nankin, as he put it, made such a vivid impression on the mind of Le Hoi, that he thought of nothing else. Day and night it haunted his mind, and made him extremely unhappy.

He laid himself down on a couch in a mood of utter despondency, and seldom stirred out. His parents came to know of it. They tried their best to find out who the little girl was; but their endeavours were equally fruitless with his own.

"Father," said Le Hoi, "the fair little girl, with her sympathetic looks, stands before me! I see the tears flowing down her cheeks!" and fell down on the couch sobbing.

The merchant concluded that his son was growing delirious over it, and that if the girl was not found out he would pine away. So he sent the town-crier, specifying the day on which Le Hoi saw her, to proclaim a high reward to any who would point out the place where the little girl lived that held a yellow banner over a kitten with a broken leg, near the Porcelain Tower, on that day.

After all, the girl was found out. She was the daughter of another merchant, who proved to be a friend of the father of Le Hoi. When Le Hoi saw her, he was beside himself

with joy, and requested her to make him a present of her banner. Every day he visited her in her house, and then brought her home to spend a few hours with him and his parents. His parents, who had long been in suspense if he would ever find a partner in life as humane and tender as himself, were extremely delighted to see the two together.

In course of time a deep attachment sprang up between them, and they became husband and wife. They were so humane and charitable that it was long a saying in Nankin, that the poor of the city would find all the comforts of life if they but pronounced the names of Le Hoi and his wife

The Prince remarked, "When Le Hoi read the heart of the little girl in her innocent and amiable countenance, and in the tears of commiseration she shed over the helpless little animal, he must, indeed, have been extremely gratified. All such means of reading others' thoughts and feelings have to be highly commended."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, all means of reading others' thoughts short of the Wonderful Pair of Spectacles have, indeed, to be highly commended."

The Prince wished to know all about the Wonderful Pair of Spectacles, and the Mandarin told the tale as follows :—

The Wonderful Pair of Spectacles.

In a certain city on the banks of the Amu there were two friends, named Damar and Sirnib, who, one day, while walking on the banks of the river, entered into a conversation to this effect.

Damar— "What an excellent thing it would be if we could know what passes in the hearts of others!"

Sirnib— "Yes, it would, indeed, be the happiest thing on earth to read others' thoughts at a glance!"

Damar— "Then I shall be able to know what you wish to have from me without putting you to the trouble of asking for it."

Sirnib— "Yes, I should be able to know what you choose to have from me before you should actually let me know of it."

Sirnib had scarcely finished speaking, when a fairy rose from the river, and, standing before them, said, "Well, your wish has been heard by the god of the river, and I have been sent up to see you, and give you your desires."

Damar said, "Then let us know how our wish is to be gratified."

Sirnib said, "O, do not delay any longer."

Thereupon, the fairy drew out from her pocket a pair of gilt spectacles, and addressing Damar, said, "Now, put them on and look at the heart of your friend."

To his surprise, Damar read every secret thought of Sirnib, and, after meditating for a while, said, with a sigh, "Ah, Sirnib, but for that one thought of yours, you must, indeed, be counted the most sincere friend!"

Sirnib said, with great concern, "Damar, do tell me what it is!"

"Why, Sirnib," said Damar, "did you not, a moment ago, think that if you alone had the privilege of using this pair of spectacles it would be an excellent thing?"

Sirnib said with a smile, "Now, good Damar, let us see if your thoughts have been purer," and putting on the pair of spectacles, looked attentively at the heart of his friend.

After scrutinising all the thoughts in it, he put by the pair of spectacles with a deep sigh, and said, "Ah, Damar, I never knew you would be so vindictive!"

"I should like to know why you call me vindictive," said Damar.

"Why, Damar," said Sirnib, "did not the thought occur to you a moment ago that you should avail yourself of the earliest opportunity to chastise me for the thought

"PUTTING ON THE PAIR OF SPECTACLES" (*p.* 137).

I entertained about the proprietorship of the pair of spectacles?"

Damar replied, "Your query but betrays your folly!"

"How so?" said Sirnib, angrily.

Damar replied, "Why do you complain against my thought when your thought was equally bad?"

Sirnib said, "I assure you the evil intent in my thought was not half as reprehensible as in yours."

Damar said, "Evil is evil, be it the size of a mustard-seed or of a mountain."

Sirnib said, "Let me tell you that you are the most vindictive person alive, in spite of all your specious arguments to the contrary."

Damar said, "Allow me to assure you that there is more hidden villainy in your bosom than in twenty hearts like mine put together, and that your heart was black as the blackest night while I fancied it was bright as a summer day!"

Sirnib exclaimed, "How I curse the day on which I called you friend for the first time!"

"I curse the day when I first saw you!" said Damar.

Thus poor Damar and Sirnib, who had been such friends before, became deadly enemies, and were going to challenge each other to mortal combat, when the fairy drew out a golden vial from the folds of her garment, and poured a little of the balmy ointment in it on the head of each. Instantly all ill-feelings disappeared from their minds. They asked the fairy what the name of the vial was.

She replied, "It is the vial of oblivion; out of it come the drops of a balmy ointment called forgiveness."

Then the two friends, who had forgotten all that had transpired between them, walked hand in hand as before.

The fairy followed them some distance, and said, "Will you put on the spectacles once more?"

"Never more!" said Damar; "we will keep all the evil to ourselves, and do nothing but good to our friends."

Sirnib said, "Ah, evil of the size of a mustard-seed weighs down good of the size of a mountain. A moment of animosity annihilates an age of harmony and friendship. It is, therefore, evident that heaven has denied to man the power of reading the hearts of his companions, lest the pleasure of reading others' thoughts might be more than counter-

balanced by the misery to which it leads. So, good fairy, keep the pair of spectacles to yourself, and see that it no more falls into our hands!"

The Prince observed, "It is, indeed, true that a mere trifle often creates differences between people who had been friends for years together."

Another Mandarin remarked, "Sire, a great deal of good that friends do to one another is often lost through the lack of self-denial in some trifling instance or other, on either side, even as the Mountain of Gold was lost by the miser Aga, because he would not part with as much of it as would come up to a mustard-seed in size."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he narrated it as follows:—

The Miser and the Mountain of Gold.

In the city of Bushire there was a miser, named Aga, who fancied that there was somewhere a mountain of pure gold, and that if he secured it he would be the richest man on earth.

He said to himself, "Surely, I shall be able to meet some man in Bushire who knows where the mountain is," and often went out, dressed in the rags which formed his garments, to find out the man.

People that saw him go out would say, "Miser Aga is going out in quest of the mountain of gold."

One day, as he was rambling at some distance from the city, a Genius appeared before him, saying, "Aga, I know where the mountain is. Yet all that I can do is to show it to you; more I cannot. What will you do with it?"

Aga replied, "I will bring it home and lock it up in my coffers."

So the Genius transferred him at once to a wood full of trees whose trunks, branches, and leaves were of gold, and whose fruit consisted of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, saying, "Our road to the Mountain of Gold is through this wood."

Aga said, "In addition to the mountain, I shall cut down these trees and take them all home, not omitting their roots, and the earth from which they have been growing."

The Genius said, "You propose putting the mountain in your coffers; where will you put the branches of these trees?"

"I will sell all my cattle and put the branches in the sheds," said Aga.

"The leaves?" said the Genius.

"I keep a dog to watch my house; I will sell him for the price he may fetch, and put the leaves in his hole," said Aga.

"The trunks?" said the Genius.

"I have a son and a daughter who have each been occuping a room. I shall send them down to sleep in the kitchen, and put the trunks in their rooms," said Aga.

"The vast quantity of fruit?" said the Genius.

"Let me see," said Aga; "my wife has a room for herself. She will vacate it and go into the kitchen with her children, and I will put the fruit into it."

"The roots, and the earth, and sundry other things?' said the Genius.

"They will go into my own room, and into various other holes and crevices in the house."

The Genius asked how he was going to guard so much wealth from thieves.

Aga replied, "Dogs as a rule are more faithful than men.

There are many hungry dogs in the streets of Bushire. Myself, my wife, and our children will stint ourselves in our usual fare, and give to them a share, so that they may guard the house with care."

The Genius observed with a smile, "Why, good Aga, your comforts seem to diminish in proportion to the increase of your wealth and prosperity!"

Aga replied, "Of all things that elude our grasp with dogged pertinacity, gold is the most conspicuous. So, when once it gets into our clutches, it ought to be our care to keep it, and, if possible, to augment it."

Then the Genius led Aga to the mountain. It was very lofty, and some of its peaks seemed to touch the clouds. Aga saw it with wonder, and exclaimed, "I wish I had been born, bred, and buried on this mountain!"

Then they walked round its base, and saw various people, young and old, of both sexes, going round like themselves.

The miser asked his guide who they were.

The Genius replied, "Aga, all people, young or old, dream of the Mountain of Gold. I have been appointed to bring some of them here. They have come to carry off the mountain like you."

"Alas," said Aga, "it is but one mountain, and so many of them here! So, I shall not have it after all!"

"Not so, Aga," said the Genius, "I am sorry I did not speak to you of these people, when I told you of the mountain. But there is no harm in going shares with them."

Aga exclaimed, with an emphatic shake of the head, "I will not give them an atom out of the mountain. I must have it all to myself."

The Genius said, "No, good Aga, you will not lose much by going shares with them. There are but a dozen

people after all, as you see. There are a dozen peaks of the mountain. Further, each peak, when taken out, will grow into another mountain with a dozen peaks, by itself."

Aga replied, "If so, I shall be all the happier. I will carry the whole mountain, and splitting it into twelve peaks, breed twelve great mountains out of them. Then

"AGA . . . . WENT TO ITS BASE."

again, I shall split each mountain into twelve peaks, and have them all grown into great mountains of gold—and so on, continually."

As Aga was in this manner determined to have the whole Mountain of Gold to himself, the Genius said, "Well, if so, you had better take the mountain home."

Instantly Aga, in his eagerness to possess the Mountain of Gold, went to its base to see if he could by any

chance lift it up. But it defied all his strength. So he requested the Genius to transfer it to his house.

The Genius replied, "I can, as I already pointed out, but show you the Mountain of Gold. There is, however, another secret in connection with the mountain which I may divulge to you."

"What is it?" asked Aga, with still greater avidity.

The Genius said, "If you will give as much as a mustard-seed of gold out of the mountain to the twelve people going round it—I assure you they will share the seed equally among themselves, and depart contented—you will be able to carry off the mountain as though it were a feather."

Aga pondered over the subject for a moment, and said, "That I will not!"

"If so," said the Genius, "you must carry it home if you can," and disappeared.

"Alas," said Aga, "what is the use of longing to possess the Mountain of Gold, without the power to carry it home!"

The Genius, who was watching him at a distance, said, "Aga, if misers had the power to carry off all the mountains of gold of which they dream, without giving as much as a mustard-seed out of them to others, then there would hardly be any space on earth for other people to put their things in."

Poor Aga returned to Bushire with a very unhappy heart.

The story of his failure got abroad. Whenever a man fancied he would get at some great thing, like the Mountain of Gold, people in Bushire would say, "Well, there is Aga going in quest of the Mountain of Gold!"

The Prince remarked, "Poor Aga! He must, indeed, be pitied. It seemed as though his cupidity was scoring

victory after victory in conjunction with the Genius, till, after all, a mere trifle upset the whole, and sent back Aga with all his hopes blasted for ever."

Another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, misers and despots meet with discomfiture from some unexpected obstacle of their own creation, even as the Giant Death-Sprinkle, who fell a victim to his own wickedness, which led him to aspire for such a high prize as the hand of the fair and amiable Princess Dirnar."

The Prince wished to know all about the Giant and the Princess, and the Mandarin proceeded with the story :—

The Princess Dirnar and the Giant Death-Sprinkle.

In the island of Java there lived a Giant, named Death-Sprinkle, because he had the wonderful power of killing people by simply sprinkling water on their heads. Whenever he felt hungry, he took a great bucket of water, and, going about the country, would sprinkle the water in it on the heads of as many people as came in his way, and carry off their bodies for his breakfast.

The matter was reported to the Sultan, and he went out with his army to meet the Giant.

He came out from the mountain-cave in which he lived. and with a loud laugh addressed the Sultan as follows :—

"You have an army—I have a bucket. Yet see what the result of the contest will be." Then he sprinkled the water in his bucket on the troops of his Majesty, and all those on whom the drops fell dropped down dead.

The Sultan escaped with the remaining army, and shut himself up in his capital.

The Giant pursued him to the very gates of the city, and posted himself in a tower at some distance, saying, "I will not leave this place till I sprinkle on the heads of the Sultan and all his subjects the water in this bucket, and feed upon their bodies."

During the day, Death-Sprinkle went out into the country, and killing as many as came in his way, returned to the tower for the night. Therefore the people left their homes, and hid themselves in the caves of the mountains.

At the same time a great drought came over the land. A dreadful famine followed the drought. The people in the city, who were cut off from their brethren in the country, having no provisions whatever, ate cats, dogs, rats, mice, and other vermin.

The Sultan assembled his ministers, and laid the state of affairs before them. They advised his Majesty to enter into a treaty with the Giant. So the Grand Vizier was sent to negotiate with him.

He stood on the ramparts, and said, "Great Death-Sprinkle, the Sultan is sorry for what has happened. Propose your own terms of peace, and he will accept them."

"Well," said Death-Sprinkle, "that is a wise Sultan after all. Tell him Death-Sprinkle will not take his hand out of his bucket till the Princess Dirnar, his only daughter, is sent to him as his bride, and one-half his Majesty's kingdom is ceded therewith."

The Grand Vizier laid the terms of peace before the Sultan and his council.

"His Majesty said, "I would rather give up the whole of my kingdom than give him my daughter in marriage."

So there was lamentation again in the city.

The Princess Dirnar heard what had happened. She went to her father, and said, "Sire, send me to Death-Sprinkle. I think it better that one like me should suffer than that a whole country should be lost in suspense and misery."

The Sultan tried to dissuade the Princess from her purpose, representing to her the dreadful fate to which she voluntarily offered herself a victim. But Dirnar continued resolute, so the Sultan, with tears in his eyes, ordered the Grand Vizier to take her to the ramparts of the city and hand her over to the Giant.

When Death-Sprinkle saw the Princess he was very glad. So he exclaimed, "I will do no more harm to my father-in-law and his subjects; for he that receives a man's daughter in marriage becomes the guardian of his interests." Then he addressed the Princess as follows:—"What a beautiful little Princess you are! If I had not made up my mind to make you my wife, I should roast you this moment for breakfast! You are so sweet!"

The Princess pretended to be delighted by this compliment. The Giant came nearer to take her hand and kiss it. The Princess said, "You have long been without a wife to take care of you. Wash yourself with the water in the bucket that I may comb your hair and help you to dress."

So, beginning to wash his head, he sprinkled on it a little of the water in the bucket, and instantly fell down dead upon the ground. The Princess exclaimed, "Certainly, no man had ever a dagger that could not stab him to death! The Giant has fallen a victim to his own wicked power!"

The Sultan was in an ecstasy of joy when he saw that the Giant was dead, and that his daughter was freed from the dreadful fate that had been impending over her. He received her with open arms, and embracing her tenderly

said, "My child, thou hast, indeed, made me and my subjects happy for ever by a stroke of thy genius!"

Then his Majesty returned to the city with his daughter, and his subjects praised the Princess Dirnar for her stratagem, and spake of her everywhere as the benefactress of the country. In the island of Java they celebrated, for a long time after the event, a festival once a year in commemoration of it, when a young lady, dressed as the Princess Dirnar, would stand before a tall man in the grotesque attire of a giant, and enact the scene; while the Sultan, his Grand Vizier, and the people stood at a distance watching the whole proceedings with eagerness. After the overthrow of the Giant, a procession would form round the lady in the disguise of the Princess, with the Sultan and his courtiers at its head, and the whole party would return to the city, shouting, "Ye Javanese, call upon the Princess Dirnar when ye are in trouble, and she will deliver you, even as she delivered your fathers from the fell fiend Death-Sprinkle!"

The Prince, with a smile remarked, "Poor Death-Spinkle was, indeed, a very unhappy lover. When he fancied the joy he had hoped for was at hand, he was sorely disappointed."

Another Mandarin, who heard this jocose observation of the Prince, stood up and said, "Sire, Death-Sprinkle was, indeed, as unhappy in his love as his brother Left-Whisker, who lived in the island of Formosa."

The Prince laughed when he heard the name Left-Whisker, and requested the Mandarin to relate all about him without further delay.

The Mandarin narrated the story as follows:—

The Story of the Giant Left-Whisker.

In the island of Formosa there lived a Giant who had only the limbs and organs on his left side. Therefore, he

"HIS LEFT WHISKER, HOWEVER, WAS VERY LONG."

had not the right ear, the right eye, the right nostril, the right whisker, the right lip, the right hand, and the right leg. His left whisker, however, was very long, as if the

two whiskers had been growing into one. Therefore, he was known all over the island as the Giant Left-Whisker.

Although he hobbled on one leg, smiled with half a lip, smelt with a single nostril, saw with one eye, heard with one ear, and had but one whisker to adjust with one hand, yet he had a fancy that he was the most comely person ever born on the island of Formosa. Although, as the people said, he was as old as the mountains and streams, and had been the terror of the island from time immemorial, yet he had a belief that he was the youngest person on the island. He showed no mercy whatever to those who expressed a different opinion. But he had such a hideous appearance, that people who saw him at once exclaimed, "What a horrid monster!" Instantly he pursued them with frightful speed and put them to death.

Left-Whisker would go about the country from time to time, to see if any young lady fell in love with him; for he was very eager to get married, and often said to himself, I do not wish to carry off a young lady and marry her. I am comely, I am young. They say young ladies are fond of comely youths. Thus some young lady will some day fall in love with me, and accept me as her husband. So that, if ever she should quarrel with me, I might be able to say, "Against me never raise your voice; for I am the husband of your choice."

But instead of any young lady falling in love with Left-Whisker, a great many people perished at his hands, because, so soon as they saw him, they exclaimed, "What a horrid monster!"

There was an old hag in the island whose sons kept a smithy. She said to herself, "Left-Whisker is mad after young ladies; but not one of them will ever come in his way. In the meanwhile, people are perishing by hundreds. Something must be done on their behalf."

So she posted herself in the way of Left-Whisker one evening, and said, "Left-Whisker, I am comely, I am young; take me for your wife."

Left-Whisker said, "Prove to me you are young, and I will take you for my wife."

"Why, Left-Whisker," said the hag, "my great-grandfather was killed by you, because he called you a monster. He was born long after you; and I was born, of course, long after him. So am I not young enough to be your wife?"

"Good!" said Left-Whisker; "now prove to me you are comely."

"Why, Left-Whisker," said the hag, "you hobble on one leg, I walk on two. You smile with half a lip, I smile with lips in perfect order. You smell with a single nostril, I smell with two. You see with one eye, I see with two. You hear with one ear, I hear with two——"

Before the hag could finish her long-winded description of her charms the Giant interrupted her, saying, "Well! well! Let me cut short your rigmarole by telling you that I possess one thing which you have not."

"Ah, what is it, good Left-Whisker?" said the hag, with surprise.

"Why my manly, beautiful, long whisker," said Left-Whisker, proudly adjusting that emblem of manliness and beauty.

The hag acknowledged her defeat, and silently went home.

The next day she presented herself before Left-Whisker with two long whiskers, to his great astonishment.

"How did you get them?" said Left-Whisker.

The hag replied, "The process is easy; but it is possible only to those who are really in love. I am in love with you—ah, who would not love you, that sees your manly,

beautiful, long whisker!—and so, I got the two whiskers in no time."

Left-Whisker was eager to have his right whisker first. "For," said he, "if one whisker of mine captivated one young lady, two whiskers must enslave the hearts of an equal number, so I shall have two wives instead of one. I will put an arm over the shoulders of each. Ah! that I can't. I will put an arm over the shoulders of one, and a leg over the shoulders of the other, and bid them dance and bid them skip, while I smile and kiss each with half a lip." So he said to the hag, "I must confess I am desperately in love with you—do help me to get my right whisker."

The hag said, "The process may give you some pain. Are you prepared to endure it?"

Left-Whisker replied, "I am prepared to endure any amount of pain for another whisker."

The hag then led the Giant to the smithy, and, taking up a pair of heated tongs, bade her sons hold him tight, drew the heated tongs in the form of a whisker on his right cheek, and then thrust the instrument into his left eye, which, by the way, was the only eye he had.

Poor Left-Whisker roared like thunder as he ran from the smithy, shouting at intervals, "I shall have nothing more to do with young ladies! nothing more! I say, nothing more!"

Having lost his only eye he did not know how to reach his cave in the mountain. Nor is it known yet which way he went. Some fancied that he plunged into the sea, which he reached, and disappeared.

But this was a mere conjecture. For some people in Formosa to this day maintain that Left-Whisker is trimming his right whisker to make his *début* again into the world of beauty and fashion, as it exists on the island.

Be this as it may, the old hag was long known in the

island as the wife of Left-Whisker. If any young gentleman fancied himself remarkably youthful and comely, people would ask him to pay a visit to the wife of Left-Whisker, and get his pretensions to youthfulness and comeliness tested by her and her famous pair of tongs.

The Prince observed, "The ambition of the Giant to get a suitable wife and settle down in life was, indeed, laudable. The only pity was that nobody on the island chose to be his wife."

This humorous remark excited the emulation of another Mandarin, and he stood up saying, "Sire, some who wish to get suitable wives never find their object fulfilled, while those who do not really want them are compelled to have them, even as the brothers who went by the name of the Hive of Happy Bees."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story of the Hive of Happy Bees, and he proceeded with it as follows :—

The Hive of Happy Bees.

In a certain country, not far from the Celestial Empire, there were six dwarfs, who were brothers. They were born in idleness, brought up in idleness, and lived in idleness, so that it might be said of them that they breathed, moved, and had their being in idleness. They had, at the same time, plenty of money, so they lived very luxuriously.

What with idleness, what with their wealth and luxury, they became very bulky. Some called them turnips, some called them melons, and some called them pumpkins. But they recked not. They continued to grow crosswise, till they could hardly lift up their heads and look at the ceiling. What little activity was in them gradually disappeared. Their

servants observed, "Formerly masters would come down to the breakfast-parlour and have their breakfast there; but now they want it to be served in their bedroom."

Here it must be pointed out that all the brothers, who loved one another tenderly, and who said they could not live for one moment without seeing one another, occupied the same bedroom, which they seldom left.

Thus, in course of time, they solved all those happy problems of drones, which some eminent philosophers of their school have summed up in the following dicta: "Walking is better than running; standing better than walking; sitting better than standing; lying better than sitting; and sleeping better than waking," and spent the greater part of the day in sleep, each waking at intervals for a moment or two to inquire how the rest were getting on—thus graphically illustrating the truth of the maxim—the activity of sluggards is slumber.

In this style they got on very well for a good long while, everybody calling them, collectively, The Hive of Happy Bees. It is yet a mystery why they were called bees while actually they were such drones. Perhaps the name was applied to them from their diminutive size.

Now it was a custom in that country that everybody should be married while yet he was very young. It was the highest praise that could possibly be bestowed upon parents to say that they had married their children while they were mere babies. So, be he poor or wealthy, sickly or healthy, sane or insane, dwarf or giant, he must be married by a certain age. Parents who, by any unforeseen causes, doomed their children to celibacy beyond the period, were considered unpardonably guilty by the community to which they belonged.

So the parents of the Six Happy Bees made up their minds to marry them. Again, bulk was the standard of

beauty among the people. A lady might possess the most charming face, the most elegant manners, the most valued accomplishments, yet, if she was but lean, they unhesitatingly called her ugly. A lady might possess none of these, yet, if she had, as the poets of the country put it, a neck as thick as a cabbage, a waist as round as a drum, and hands and legs which rivalled the trunk and legs of an elephant, she was sure to be called the greatest beauty of the land.

Hence, it was a common thing among the people to speak of ladies as fat and fair. Again, the taller a lady was, the comelier she was deemed to be; so much so, that they often expressed their admiration of the wisdom of the parents of a man in these terms— "What a tall wife they have given their son! That is true parental kindness!"

Therefore, the parents of the Six Happy Bees resolved to marry them to six of the fattest, fairest, and tallest ladies available among their connections. When all the preliminary arrangements for the weddings had been made, the priest came up to the Six Happy Bees, and said, "Now, gentlemen, get up and have a shave," according to the inevitable religious custom on such occasions.

The Six Bees, who did not wish to stir out for a trifling operation like that—religious rite though it was deemed to be—said, "Sire, be so good as to give yourself a shave, and count it ours by proxy."

So the priest got himself shaved on their account. Then the priest said, "Now, gentlemen, get up, and come to church to be married."

They, who were eager to avoid this exertion also, if possible, said, "Sire, be so good as to celebrate the weddings at church without our presence. We will count the brides none the less our wives."

So they were married at church—at least, the brides were married, without the bridegrooms by their side.

Then it was an indispensable rite in that country that, while returning from church after marriage, the husbands should kiss their wives on the thresholds of their houses, and take them in.

So the priest went up to the Six Happy Bees, who still kept rolling in their several beds, in their common bedroom, and said, "Now, gentlemen, get up, and go down to kiss your wives, who are waiting at the threshold."

"Ah, Sire!" said the Six Happy Bees, "can't you go through that part of the ritual also by proxy, without putting us to any inconvenience?"

"No—not I!" exclaimed the relentless priest.

So, in spite of themselves, the Six Happy Bees were brought down to kiss their wives, whom they saw for the first time in their lives.

But as the husbands were too short and fat, and the wives too tall and fat, the former could neither rise high enough to kiss their wives, nor the latter bend down low enough to be kissed by their husbands; so the Six Happy Bees and their six unhappy wives are still at the threshold of that house, in that country, trying to manage the business somehow; but, report says, yet without success.

The Prince said, "The feelings of the priest must have been greatly shocked when the six idle youths said that he might do the kissing also by proxy."

Another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, his feelings must have been shocked even as the feelings of the good Cazi Jelaludien, when he heard that the miser, Sheik Dulloo, of Mosul, was determined to go to heaven with his mortal frame and the clothes he wore thereon."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Miser in the Mosque.

In the city of Mosul there lived a miser, named Sheik Dulloo, who was reputed to be very rich, although nobody knew where he kept all his riches. Sheik Dulloo was a very regular attendant at the great mosque of the city. He took care to enter the holy edifice very early, that he might safely avoid the numerous beggars who assembled at the gate, clamouring for alms; and, when the service was over, lingered within till all the beggars had disappeared, after receiving the gifts of the rest of the congregation.

Sheik Dulloo had an object in going to the mosque so very regularly, for his prayers were to this effect :—

"Holy prophet, do intercede on my behalf with Allah and His angels, and get me a passport to enter Paradise with my mortal frame, and the clothes I wear on it."

People had often heard this prayer as Sheik Dulloo ejaculated it, and wondered at its very odd character. The beggars at the gate of the mosque, who often lay in ambush and surrounded Sheik Dulloo, in spite of his vigilance to avoid them, rallied him on the point. They would exclaim, "Ah! Sheik Dulloo, Sultan of Irem, when will you give us alms?"

Sheik Dulloo would reply, "After reaching Paradise."

The beggars would say, "Ah, that will never do. If you go to Paradise without giving us alms, you will find all the nymphs blind that fall to your share in the mansions there."

"Why should they be blind?" would ask Sheik Dulloo.

The beggars would reply, "Their eyes are but the coins the faithful give to the poor that they may live. The brighter and larger their size, the larger and brighter the eyes of the nymphs of Paradise that bring joy to the donor."

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To this Sheik Dulloo would invariably reply, "I dare say, even in Paradise, everything can be had for a price. So I will pay for the eyes of the houris, and save up money to give them dowries; and live with many a charming wife under the shade of the tree of life."

One day, the great Cazi of Mosul chanced to hear the conversation between Sheik Dulloo and the beggars. On making inquiries of some of the members of the congregation, they gave him an account of the aspirations of the miser.

Now Cazi Jelaludien was a very pious Mussulman; so he was shocked to hear that the miser entertained such a monstrous and impious idea.

That evening, therefore, when the prayers had been said, and the members of the congregation were about to disperse, he addressed them as follows:—"Brethren, there is, I hear, a member of this holy congregation who has been desirous of reaching heaven with this mortal frame and the clothes thereon. I have been thinking about the subject for some time past. I shall be happy to speak to him about the result of my cogitations, should he step forth and stand by my side for one moment."

Sheik Dulloo stepped forth.

The Cazi said, "Holy brother, your object is, indeed, praiseworthy. But there are insurmountable obstacles in your way. We may leave out of account the millions upon millions of genii that guard the way to heaven, and carefully force back to this world all who endeavour to journey on the road with this mortal frame, for we may obtain the aid of some saint, like Gazi Mustan or Gazi Mubarick, and throw dust in the eyes of the genii. But who will help you when you approach the river of fire with the bridge of hair over it? The flames in it are not like the flames in this mortal world. They are intended by Allah and his Angels specially

to purge mortals of all terrestrial traces and taints, should they bear any, and then let them into the pure precincts of Paradise. Should you approach the stream as you are, your body and your clothes will be burnt to ashes in no time."

As Sheik Dulloo gave no indication of falling in with this view of the Cazi, he snatched a torch from the hands of a torch-bearer close by, and brandishing it before Sheik Dulloo, exclaimed, "Ah, brother Sheik Dulloo, you see how hot the flame of this torch is! The flames of the stream on the way to Paradise are a million times as hot and quick in consuming things!"

Whether the good Cazi Jelaludien did so by design, or whether it was a mere accident, is yet a mystery. But somehow, the torch, in one of the flourishes the Cazi made with it, came in such close contact with the clothes on the mortal frame of the immortal Sheik Dulloo, that instantly they caught fire.

All the members of the congregation rushed to his aid, and, in the twinkling of an eye, stripped him safe and gave all his clothes to the Imam to be handed over to the beggars at the gate, according to a time-honoured custom in Mosul, that anything and everything catching fire in the great mosque should go to the share of the poor waiting at its gate for alms. The good Cazi Jelaludien threw his own mantle over the naked person of Sheik Dulloo, and clothed him for the nonce.

As the Iman threw the garments of Sheik Dulloo one after another to the beggars at the gate, they received them with great joy. The last, which was the shirt Sheik Dulloo had worn next to his skin, was very heavy, and as it was thrown to the beggars, the seams gave way and a shower of gold pieces and gems of inestimable value fell to the ground.

The beggars had all the wealth, of course, according to the time-honoured custom in Mosul. The members of the

congregation stood mute with astonishment. The mystery of Sheik Dulloo's aspirations about going to heaven with his mortal frame and the clothes thereon was solved. The story goes to say that Sheik Dulloo wished no more to go to heaven with his mortal frame and the clothes thereon. Nor did he go to the great mosque to say his prayers, nor see the good Cazi Jelaludien ever after.

To this day, in the city of Mosul and its neighbourhood, when a husband takes it into his head to play the miser, saying, "Good wife, I have no money to spare," while his wife asks him for clothes or jewels, the latter generally says, "Ah, good husband, let me see Sheik Dulloo's shirt; I know the money is there," and suiting the action to the word sets about scrutinising the garments of the bewildered husband, and, of course, invariably finds the object of her wishes there.

The Prince said, "It was very kind of the Cazi to have pointed out to the miser the extreme folly of his aspirations; but it was too late when he perceived it."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, the miser was, indeed, too late in perceiving the value of the advice given by the Cazi, even as the goblin perceived, when it was too late, that he had assumed the wrong guise, when the Cat Gunduple made a morsel of him."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to narrate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Cat Gunduple and the Golden Mouse.

In the Island of Borneo there was a Goblin named Pasangū, who delighted in deceiving children in the following manner. Whenever a number of them joined together

to play, he would assume the form of some child that had received a severe beating, and stand sobbing and crying at a distance.

Instantly the children would say, "Ah, poor little thing! Some wicked boy has given it a beating!" and ask, "Where is the boy?"

At this Pasangū would cry louder with a more woeful face. The children would say, "Don't cry—do tell us where the boy is—now don't—there is a dear!"

Pasangū would continue shouting all kinds of inarticulate things after the manner of little folk in that sad predicament, and ultimately point to some quarter at a distance.

The children would say, "The little dear has received a thrashing from some wicked boy over there." Instantly some of their number, resolving to avenge the wrongs of the little dear that had got a thrashing from the wicked boy over there, would follow their dependent with that spirit of chivalrous sympathy which characterises children all the world over. As many as thus followed him became the victims of Pasangū for the day.

There was an orphan boy in the village who was utterly lame, and who was maintained by the people. His only duty was to see that the children went to the playground and returned safely. He was generally carried to the playground by his little friends and deposited on a high mound, from which he witnessed their sports. He had a cat named Gunduple, who was his constant companion, and who amused him by all kinds of sportive tricks.

The boy would say, "Now, Gunduple, play at catching mice!"

Instantly, Gunduple would pretend to have seen mice before it, and, chasing them up and down, kill every one of his imaginary victims.

Then the boy would say, "Now, Gunduple, there is a rat in the hole!"

Instantly, the cat would pretend to have discovered the hole, and go round it sprinkling imaginary grain. After this it would wait at some distance for the rat which was expected to come out for the grain, and then, pretending to have seen it, dart at a brick or broken tile, and bring it to the boy, as if it were a rat.

This lame boy the people of the village considered responsible for the children that disappeared from time to time; so they gave him a good beating one day, saying, "You are a helpless orphan. We help you that you may take care of our children when they play. Why don't you find out the goblin that devours them?"

The lame boy said to himself, "Well, I have neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, so if I cry, nobody will ask why. I must be bold, like a man that is old. Now, these people think I am a burden on them. I must see that they don't think so hereafter." So he replied, "I have neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister. I have a cat, so I may go where I like. If you promise to give me a house and a hundred acres of land, I will kill the goblin. If you say you won't—why then, I won't!"

The people said, "If you kill the goblin, we will give you a house and a hundred acres of land."

The boy seemed to consider the question for a moment, and, with an angry face, said, "Well, I think I had better not kill the giant, specially when I think of the beating I got from you," and, calling to his cat, prepared to creep out of the village.

The villagers, with one voice, said, "Now don't go without killing the goblin; we will give you the house and the hundred acres at once." So they gave him what he wanted that very moment.

The next day, at the playground, the boy said, "Now, my good friends, there is a goblin here who can assume every form but that of a mouse. So remember that every thing strange but a mouse should at once rouse your suspicions."

Pasangū said to himself, "I can take any form I like; but the boy says I can't be a mouse, so I must take the form of a mouse, if I wish to avoid suspicion. Why, then I shall be a golden mouse, and lead all the children away from the place. Not a single child will turn to his house till he has caught the golden mouse."

"THE CAT SPRANG AT THE GOLDEN MOUSE."

The greed of the goblin being thus excited to an inordinate extent, he became a golden mouse with a pretty tail, which was very long and bright, and with nice little bells round his neck. The children exclaimed with one voice, "Ah! what a pretty mouse! Why, it is a golden mouse! Without it not one of us will turn towards his house!"

The lame boy said to his cat, "Hollo, Gunduple, there is a golden mouse for you to-day!"

Instantly, the cat sprang at the golden mouse and made a morsel of it. When it was too late the goblin exclaimed, "Ah, it was indeed unwise to have assumed this guise in the presence of a cat, which was ready to devour its victim!"

The boy had already got the house and the hundred

acres. Now he got the title—Lord of the Cat Gunduple that killed the Goblin Pasangū when he became the golden mouse. They say Gunduple was long eager to get another golden mouse of the kind, but was not successful; for in the island of Borneo none ever met in his house with a marvellous golden mouse.

The Prince remarked, "The lame boy was a knowing little fellow. You can hardly imagine that one of his age and circumstances would be so provident as to get the house and the acres before actually achieving the feat for which they were meant as a reward."

Here another Mandarin, who was watching for an opportunity to amuse the Prince with a story, stood up and said, "Sire, knowing boys, no doubt, do well, provided they are not knowing like Uzbec 'I know.'"

"Who was he?" asked the Prince, with great curiosity, and the Mandarin proceeded with the story as follows:—

Little Uzbec "I Know."

In the province of Ajerbizan there was a poor tailor who had a son named Uzbec. This little boy of ten said to himself, "Men know: women know: why should not boys know? Whenever they say, 'O, he is but a boy, he knows nothing,' it simply throws me into a passion. I will not say, for one moment, 'I do not know,' come what will." So he got into the habit of replying, "I know," in connection with everything said to him.

His father remarked, "My dear boy, you are young, and utterly inexperienced in the ways of the world. If you continue saying 'I know,' without endeavouring to know before telling people you know, you will be counted a

very presumptuous little fellow, and every one will shun you."

But little Uzbec said, "I care not what they say of me. I would rather be called a knowing and presumptuous little fellow, than a stupid, modest youth." This made his father utterly hopeless of himself amending his son's conduct, so he took him one day to a pedagogue, who was said to have acquired wonderful skill in training boys, and said, "Sir, will you set my boy right?"

The pedagogue said, "Don't put me any questions on the point. Hand over your boy and go home. Come back to-morrow, and see if he is not quite a different boy."

The tailor said, "But Uzbec is a very obstinate little fellow; how will you set him right so soon?"

The pedagogue said, "The more the wildness and obstinacy of the boy, the less the time I take in taming him. My brother is a tamer of horses: I am a tamer of boys. He uses the whip: I use the birch rod. He breaks the mettle of wild horses: I break the mettle of wild boys. We were born very nearly under the same star."

"Of course you are never needlessly rough to boys," said the tailor.

"Well," said the pedagogue, "as to that, I may say I tame them in the politest way. I am rough only when they are rough. As the good old proverb says, 'When they play the chick, I play the cock; but when they play the cock, I play the kite.'" Then he turned to Uzbec and said, "you know that—don't you?"

Uzbec said, demurely, "I know."

The tailor went home, leaving Uzbec with the pedagogue. After a while the pedagogue said, "Uzbec, my boy, you know how to play at catching the crane all day—do you not?"

"I know," was the reply.

The pedagogue then bade Uzbec lift up his right leg behind, and bending his body, put his right thumb on the floor—thus representing the outlines of a crane standing on one leg.

Poor Uzbec could not disobey, because he said he knew how to catch the crane all day. So he was catching the crane all day. The wife of the pedagogue looked after the com-

"THE PEDAGOGUE THEN BADE UZBECK LIFT UP HIS RIGHT LEG."

forts of the boys who boarded at the school. In the evening the pedagogue put a note to her in the hands of Uzbec, saying, "You know what is written in it, do you not?"

"I know," said Uzbec, and gave the note to the wife of the pedagogue.

She gave all the other boys their dinner, and said to Uzbec, "The note says that you are not to have your dinner, and that you are aware of it."

"I know," said Uzbec, and went to bed.

But soon hunger pinched him hard. He went into the pantry to see if he could get anything to eat. As he was going out in another direction, after his fruitless search in

the pantry, the housemaid, who had been watching him, said, "You know what there is in your way—don't you?"

"I know," said Uzbec, and proceeding a few steps further, tumbled into a deep sink, and stood buried up to the neck in the mire. The cries of the housemaid brought down the pedagogue, his wife, and all the boys boarding in the house. They laughed outright at the ludicrous position in which poor Uzbec had placed himself, and helped him out of the sink. The housemaid washed him, saying, "Ah, if you had told me you did not know, I should have instantly informed you of the sink."

When Uzbec went to bed he could not sleep. He said to himself, "My muscles were very nearly cracked by catching the crane all day. Then I had no dinner. When I went out in quest of some food, I fell into that horrid sink and stood buried up to the neck—the laughing-stock of my comrades, the pedagogue, and his wife, not to speak of the housemaid, who pitied me so much. Who knows how many such sinks there are, perhaps one at every turn!"

This last thought made him tremble. Then with difficulty he composed himself to sleep, dreaming all night of the sink and its horrors. The next morning the pedagogue said to Uzbec, "My good boy, all yesterday you were engaged in the game of catching the crane. To-day you will play at leaping the fence. You know it—don't you?"

Uzbec replied, with great humility, "I do not know."

Instantly the pedagogue sent for the tailor, and handing over the boy, said, "You know I remarked the more the wildness and obstinacy of the boy the sooner I could tame him. Now, here is your son, who has fully answered my expectations."

The tailor wishing to test this, asked Uzbec, "Do you know how you will get on in future?"

"I do not know," was the modest reply.

Father and son went home together, and that day forward Uzbec was one of the most intelligent and modest boys in Ajerbizan. When people asked him questions at random about things he did not know, saying, "Do you know that?"—"Do you know this?" he would pause before giving a reply, muttering to himself: "Ah, let me first know if there is a sink in the turn."

If people asked why he had grown so tardy in giving replies to queries, he would exclaim, "Ah, there may be a sink in the turn."

The Prince remarked, "Well, it was by bitter experience that Uzbec 'I know,' became Uzbec 'I don't know.'" Before the Prince could proceed further, another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, it is experience that gives us a real knowledge of things, and helps us to form a correct opinion of the good and evil in them, even as the savage King Amambeeni did."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to tell him the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Dream of the Savage King.

Far to the east of the Celestial Empire there was an island in which all men lived as brothers, and all women as sisters. Each lived in a shed which he called a house, had a mat which he called a bed, and a piece of timber which he called a pillow. Every man had a wife, and every woman had a husband. So there were neither old bachelors nor old maids on the island.

Any one might go into the shed of another, and have his meals. Nobody called whatever he had his own. It was the common property of all; and nobody had anything

which every other person on the island had not. Each wore the skin of a tiger round his loins, and carried a spear and shield to hunt in the woods, all sharing the spoils of the chase equally.

Every one on the island lived a hundred years. When his lifetime approached its end, he dressed himself in his tiger-skin garments, took up his spear and shield, and, with his wife by his side, said, "Death, now you may approach me!" and was gathered unto his fathers.

This happy island was known among its inhabitants as Andango, or the Island of Contented People. But the rest of the world, and especially the people of the Celestial Empire, called it the Island of the Tiger Skin Savages.

They had a king named Amambeeni, which, in their language, meant the King of the Contented People. His office was nominal, there being nothing to be done by way of administration—no post, no police, no revenue, no judges, no ministers, no ambassadors; because no letters, no thieves, no taxes, no quarrels, no politics, no international relations. The King lived in a shed like other people, and went round eating where he liked, and sleeping where he liked.

This King Amambeeni had long heard that there was such a thing as Civilisation in the Celestial Empire, and he was very eager to know all about the good and evil in it. But, as he had no junks in which he could make a voyage to our shores, he contented himself with the thought that some day the Spirit of Civilisation—for these savages believed that everything had a spirit presiding over it—would pay him a visit, and give him some idea of the good and evil under its control.

One day this King Amambeeni was on the sea-shore, playing with the children of the island. His Majesty, according to his wont, made himself one of them, now

pursuing the crabs that disappeared in the holes which they dug with wonderful rapidity; now building baby houses of sand, with shells for windows, and doing a great many other things to amuse his juvenile friends.

Just then, a junk appeared in the horizon, and soon a boat put to shore from it.

A fair young lady, with other ladies, who appeared to be her companions, landed from the boat, and, addressing Amambeeni, said, "Good Amambeeni, I am Civilisation.

"KING AMAMBEENI WAS ON THE SEA-SHORE" (*p.* 169).

I was born in the Celestial Empire, and have long flourished in it. These are my handmaids—wealth, fashion, and many others, as you see."

Before she could finish Amambeeni interrupted her, saying, "Ah, I have long heard of you. I am glad to see you after all. Now, tell me what you can do?"

The lady replied, "I can change the condition of your subjects completely, and make them all happy."

Amambeeni said, "Well, there is good as well as evil in you, as I have been told. Now, let us have some experience of the latter, and I shall be able to tell you whether we shall have you here, or send you back in your junk to the Celestial Empire."

Instantly the lady passed her hands over the eyes of the

Savage King, when he fell into a slumber, and began to dream as follows :—

One morning, he rose from bed, and, girding the tiger-skin round his loins, came out of his bed, when two tall men, dressed like the Pekin police, took hold of him, saying, "You have come out without your trousers and other clothes ; now, come to the lock-up, or give bail."

Amambeeni knew not who the men were, nor what bail meant.

They said, "There is the good Lawyer Mandarin, Tokiliti, close by ; he may help you."

Tokiliti was one of his subjects, who had asked him already to spend the day with him at his shed. So he went to him, and said, "Ah, Tokiliti, these men have taken hold of me for some reason that I cannot understand, and they want me to give them something which I neither have nor ever heard of in my life !"

Tokiliti said, "Address me with the respect due to my position as a Mandarin. I am not plain Tokiliti, but Atahualpa Li Hung Tokiliti."

The King could not believe him, so he said, "Ah, Tokiliti, did you not beg of me to spend the day with you, and have a draught of milk from the new cow that you have, like every other subject of mine in the island?"

Tokiliti said he did not remember a word of the kind, and sent Amambeeni away.

When the men left the house of Tokiliti with the King, he said he felt hungry. So they took him to a house where they sold food, and gave him his breakfast.

Amambeeni wondered all the while why they wanted so many dishes and plates, while the chop-sticks with which he had to convey the food to his mouth puzzled him completely.

Then the men conducted him through the streets, which

had houses, mansions, and palaces on both sides, in lieu of the sheds of his subjects. A great many people were going about in quest of amusement.

The King asked, "Are they not going to the sea-shore to pursue the crabs, to build baby houses, to play at hide and seek, or wolf and lamb, or cock and kite?"

The men said that they were going to do nothing of the kind, and described to the King a great many amusements of people in the Celestial Empire, of which he did not understand a word.

At every turn he found places of public resort, where people drank intoxicating liquors and smoked opium; some laughing, some singing, some dancing, some discussing abstruse questions of philosophy, some deciding with wonderful ease and lucidity the most knotty points of law and politics, while others were quarrelling, swearing, and blaspheming.

While he was observing these spectacles, two men put two bills into the hands of Amambeeni. One was from Tokiliti, for having admitted Amambeeni to a consultation, for he was a lawyer; and the other from the keeper of the great house where he had his breakfast—one of the items in the latter bill being, "For looking out at the window and telling Amambeeni that it was not raining, three, four, five."

Of course Amambeeni had no money, so they took him to a money-lender, who had put up a notice saying, "From five to five hundred advanced daily without security; no fees whatever."

Amambeeni went in and asked for a loan.

A man with a long pig-tail, and a pair of whiskers vieing with the pig-tail in length, said, "We can't attend to your application unless you pay down two, five, eight."

But as Amambeeni had no money whatever, he could

not pay the money-lender's fee. So he sent away the two men with their bills.

Now the King requested the men to take him to the lock-up, by way of his shed, that he might tell his wife about his fate, and then go with them.

Accordingly, when they came to the shed, a number of men, who called themselves law officers, came to afford relief to the two men, whose bills Amambeeni had sent back, and drove out the wife and children of the King, and distrained what property he had, saying, "Every man ought to pay his debts first, and then feed his wife and children."

Being unable to endure the sight, Amambeeni turned away from the spot with the two men, who took him to their station, and thrusting him into a close room, locked it.

Just then, the King awoke from his dream.

The lady said, "All that you have seen is but a page in that chapter of my book which represents the dark side. If you will permit me to subject you to a series of such dreams, you will be able to know all about both the sides."

Amambeeni said, "There was nothing very remarkable in the dream I saw, beyond a series of evils which were the result of overstepping the bounds of simplicity and content. We have had but one side in this island, and have never had any occasion to dream of the two sides you speak of. Let us therefore live contented with it."

So he sent away the lady and her companions in the junk, and went into the island to assure himself that what he had seen was nothing but a dream, saying, "Ah! I had long imagined that the Spirit Civilisation, who flourished in the Celestial Empire, could give us more simplicity and, content if possible, but, the brief experience I had of her influence has convinced me that I would do well never to think of her again."

The Prince said, "Well, Civilisation, as we all know, can never rest content. She is a Spirit that by the aid of Knowledge, her ally, goes on creating new wants, and gratifying them. In proportion to the progress we make, our desires multiply, and seek a thousand gratifications, to which we were strangers before."

Here another Mandarin, who wished to tell the Prince a story, said, "Sire, it would, indeed, be a blessing if some one could devise the means of bringing the aspirations of the Spirit within reasonable bounds. But we must all admit that she cannot be so easily disposed of. She is not a lady as simple-hearted as the daughter of the Imam of Muscat, that we might get some Talib with ten eyes, and gratify her ambition once for all."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to tell him all about the wonderful individual he had referred to as Talib with ten eyes, and the Mandarin related the story as follows :—

The Story of Talib, the Ten-Eyed Youth.

In the city of Muscat there was a boy named Talib, who had lost an eye while yet a child. His parents were very poor, so they could not send him to school. Talib, therefore, spent a great part of his time in playing with the boys of the neighbourhood. When he came home, he helped his mother in her domestic duties.

One day, his mother said to him, "My dear Talib, you have been growing up pretty quickly. Very soon you will be a man. I shall have to get you a wife suited to our position in life. But, as you are blind of one eye, nobody will give you his daughter in marriage, unless he sees you are rich. Now, what are you going to do? Will you make

a fortune and secure a wife, or remain poor and unmarried?"

Talib replied, "Mother, I do not care to have a wife so soon. I shall wait till I find some one who will marry me as I am."

His mother said, "Then you may wait like the daughter of our Imam, who has long remained single, because she wishes to marry a man with ten eyes."

Talib said, "I daresay she will find him some day."

His mother replied, "On that day you may hope to find your wife also," meaning, of course, that the Princess would never get a husband, and Talib would never get a wife.

Some time after Talib went out for a stroll in the streets. In one of the thoroughfares he saw a crowd assembled round two men, one of whom was reading a proclamation, and the other beating a great gong, to attract the attention of people passing by. The proclamation was to this effect:—The Imam of Muscat will be obliged to any person who will introduce to him a young man with ten eyes, whom he wishes to make his son-in-law. It is no matter what his position is. Be he rich or poor, high or low, he will be at once accepted by the Imam and his daughter, provided he has that one qualification—ten eyes.

Talib stepped forth and said, "I am prepared to introduce to the Imam of Muscat the young man he wants. Take me to his presence." The reader of the proclamation took him to the Imam, who received him with every mark of attention, and entered into a long conversation with him.

In the course of this conversation Talib asked the Imam, "Is the Princess well educated?"

The Imam, being desirous of recommending his daughter's attainments, gave a long list of sciences and arts, in all of which, he said, she was a great proficient.

"For one moment," said Talib, to the Imam, "you

must leave me face to face with the Princess, and retire, otherwise I cannot hope to introduce the young man to you."

The Imam did so.

Talib, addressing the Princess, who stood on the other side of a screen, said, "Madam, you are well acquainted with arithmetic—is it not?"

"Very well, indeed!" said the Princess.

"Should I demonstrate to you, arithmetically, that I have ten eyes, will you take me?" said Talib.

"With pleasure; for nothing can be more reasonable," said the Princess.

"You won't raise any needless objections?" said Talib.

"None whatever," said the Princess, "if you demonstrate to me that you have ten eyes."

Talib said, "Now then, take a piece of parchment; remove this screen for one second, and carefully looking at my eyes, note down what I say."

The Princess took up the parchment, and removing the screen, looked at his face.

"Now," said Talib, "one of my eyes is all right. How would you represent it arithmetically?"

"As one," said the Princess.

"Good!" said Talib. "Put it down—one."

The Princess put it down.

Talib said, "You see the other eye is gone. Now, tell me how you would represent it arithmetically?"

"As zero," said the wondering Princess.

"Good!" said Talib. "Put it down—zero."

The Princess put it down.

"Now," said Talib, "good Princess, do me the favour of reading the number of my eyes arithmetically."

"Ten," said the astonished Princess.

"Give me your hand," said Talib; and the Princess did

give him her hand, as she was tired of waiting for a husband so long.

The Imam was surprised at his daughter having taken for her husband a man with one eye, while all the while she had been expressing her determination to marry a man with ten eyes.

But the Princess explained to her father how Talib had ten eyes really.

The Imam accepted the explanation, and accepted Talib as his son-in-law, because he had so successfully solved the long-felt difficulty about getting a man with ten eyes.

The Prince remarked, "She was, indeed, a happy Princess, that was long in quest of a husband with ten eyes, and eventually married a man with one eye. But the arithmetic of Talib was unimpeachable, so she must have been constrained to take him."

This humorous remark elicited the following observation from another Mandarin :—

"Sire, the arithmetic of Talib was, indeed, as unimpeachable as the judgment of Sultan Bey Bey."

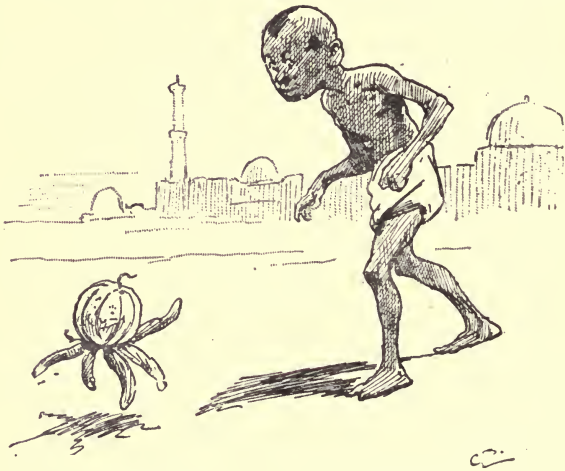
The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows :—

The Story of Sultan Bey Bey and the Giant Hum Haw.

In a certain village near the city of Algiers, there was a boy who often said to his playmates, in sport, "The whole country belongs to me. I am the Sultan. You are my ministers. All the rest are my subjects."

They would reply, "Well, the Sultan of Algiers is the Bey; you are his Sultan; so you are the Bey Bey."

Hence, the boy acquired the name of Sultan Bey Bey in the neighbourhood in which he lived. In the mountains, near Algiers, lived a Giant, who was very fond of eating little children. He would assume some tempting form, and lie in their way. When they approached him, he would cry,



"HE WOULD . . . . LIE IN THEIR WAY."

"Hum Haw," and move towards the mountains. The children would follow, fancying it was some curious animal.

He would lead them a great way into the mountains, crying, "Come, good children, Hum Haw; don't fear, good children, Hum Haw; pretty dear children, Hum Haw." When they went sufficiently near, he would devour them. Their parents often thought that the lions, which abounded in the mountains near Algiers, carried off the children.

Sultan Bey Bey was very fond of playing at "Judge and Thief," assembling a number of children around him to help him in the game. He displayed such sagacity and

wisdom in the character of a judge, which he invariably assumed, that the Sultan of Algiers heard of it with surprise, and expressed a desire to see him while discharging his functions in that capacity in the game. His Majesty appointed a day. A great pavilion was erected on a plain near the village, with seats for his Majesty and his courtiers, while Bey Bey and his officers had a portion of it set apart to themselves. All the children in the neighbourhood were also invited to be present.

Hum Haw fancied it was a very favourable opportunity to get a good number of children into his power; so he presented himself in the form of a little thief. Instantly the children who acted as policemen arrested him, and took him before the judge, with a chain round his neck. The other end of the chain was passed over a branch of a tree in front of the pavilion, and held by the officer who was the head of the police.

Bey Bey was very actively engaged in his duties. A great many thieves were brought before him, and after due inquiry convicted and punished according to the extent of their guilt. The Sultan and his courtiers were in raptures from time to time, as they heard his decisions. When Hum Haw was brought before him, he looked at him attentively, and said to the officer, "Keep him under the tree till I should be able to attend to him."

Giants, as a rule, are very greedy and thoughtless, so the mouth of Hum Haw watered at the sight of so many children around him, and he exultingly said to himself, in a whisper, "You have got them, Hum Haw; you will eat them, Hum Haw!"

Now the head of the police, who had been listening to his words, communicated the same, secretly, to the judge. But he pretended to take no notice whatever of the words of the officer.

Addressing Hum Haw, he said, "Now, my good fellow. will you speak the truth, and point out the place where you have hidden the stolen property, and be treated leniently; or would you like to have the chain hanging round your neck tightened till you die?"

Hum Haw said to himself, with a laugh, "The children I ate are the property I stole. I cannot give them back—can I?" and turning to the judge, said, "It was hunger that compelled me to steal. What I stole I ate; so the property went into my stomach. If any of your officers can get in and see, I shall, indeed, be happy to let them in!"

Here Hum Haw put out his long tongue, and smacked his lips, saying to himself that he would relish extremely sending in as many children as chose to go into his stomach to search for others that had gone before!

The tone and character of the thief's reply convinced Bey Bey that he was Hum Haw. He waited, therefore, for a while before pronouncing judgment. The Sultan and his courtiers were eagerly watching him. After mature deliberation, the judge said, "You refused to tell us what you stole. For aught we know, you might have stolen men, women, and children, and devoured them like the Giant Hum Haw. Therefore, we sentence you to be hanged by the neck."

Instantly, the officer of police pulled up the chain over the branch of the tree, and the Giant swung in the air, crying, "I am no thief! I am no thief! I am the Giant Hum Haw! I am the Giant Hum Haw!"

The judge replied, "I am no judge! I am no judge! I am the boy Bey Bey! I am the boy Bey Bey!—many of whose companions you have eaten!"

All the other children danced round the tree; one of them shouting, "The Giant-thief, Hum Haw, has been hanged by the boy-judge, Bey Bey!" and the rest repeating the chorus, "The boy-judge, Bey Bey!"

The Sultan was very glad to see that the boy Bey Bey had, by his sagacity, found out the real character of the Giant when he appeared as a little thief, and got rid of him according to the rules of justice.

He took him to his palace, and after giving him a sound education, made him a great judge. The boy who acted as the officer of police became, in course of time, the head of the police in the kingdom of Algiers.

The Prince remarked, "The guise of a thief which Hum Haw assumed led to the fatal result which he could not avoid——"

Before the Prince could proceed further, another Mandarin, who was eager to tell him a story, stood up and said, "Sire, the guise that Hum Haw assumed proved fatal to him, even as the guise of a female slave, assumed by the Giant in the story of the Golden Slipper from the Invisible Castle, led to his own destruction eventually."

The Prince, in a severe tone, requested the Mandarin to tell his tale, and he told it as follows:—

The Story of the Golden Slipper from the Invisible Castle.

In the Shan country there was a Giant who lived in a castle in the air, which nobody could see. He went into the country from time to time and carried off the most beautiful and accomplished maidens, saying, "When I shall have collected a thousand, I will marry them all, and be known as the Giant with a thousand wives. I shall have ten thousand children, who will overrun the whole of the Shan country, and rule over it."

Whenever he went into the country and carried off a maiden, the bravest man in the neighbourhood would pursue him some distance, when, all of a sudden, he would go up into his castle, exclaiming, "Now, I have got into my castle in the air, those that pursue me beware!"

In this manner he had collected nine hundred and ninety-nine maidens, whom he confined closely in his castle, and said to himself, "One more is wanting. When she is brought in, I shall at once celebrate my wedding. But who is this one? Let me see—Varagun, the daughter of the King of the Shan country, they say, is the most beautiful and accomplished Princess in the whole world. She shall complete the number."

Accordingly, the Giant went to the palace of the King in the disguise of a female slave, and told the Princess that her mother wished to see her in the garden. When the Princess come to the garden, the slave said that the Queen was in the park close by. When the Princess came to the park, the slave asked her to look up. Instantly she found herself in the castle of the Giant, to which he conveyed her, throwing off his disguise in the twinkling of an eye.

He said, "I am the King of this castle and the regions in the air over which it roams. You will be my Queen, and the mistress of the nine hundred and ninety-nine fair ladies confined in these rooms, who will also be my wives."

The Princess at once perceived that the Giant intended to marry her and the other ladies confined in the rooms; so, suppressing her emotions, she said, "Mighty Monarch of the Invisible Castle, I am, indeed, proud of the honour you wish to confer on me. The nine hundred and ninety-nine ladies ought to be equally proud of the honour your Majesty will soon confer on him. But before actually uniting my destiny with your Majesty's, I wish to know where the secret principle of your life is."

The Giant said, "But before I tell you where it is, let me know your object in asking for the information."

The Princess replied, "Illustrious Monarch of the Invisible Castle, when we begin to love a person, we are naturally concerned about his safety. If I should know that the principle of your life is safe, I shall be free from all anxiety on that score."

The Giant said, "Princess, you need not be afraid. It is perfectly safe within a toad which lives in the bowels of a great rock by the summer palace of your father. If the animal receive an injury, I shall at once receive the same. Should it perish, I shall not live a moment thereafter. So I shall live for many a long year to come—ay, till our great-great-grandchildren shall have been succeeded by their great-great-grandchildren, on the throne of the Shan country, and even thereafter for many a long year."

At this the Princess appeared to have been eased of a great burden that had been oppressing her mind—as, indeed, she was. Then she said, "I am, indeed, thankful to your Majesty for the information. There is another piece of information that I long to possess. How can this Invisible Castle be made to alight on earth?"

The Giant said, "There are nine hundred and ninety-nine corners in the Castle; at each corner there is a ring. In the great central hall of the Castle there is another ring, on which all the nine hundred and ninety-nine depend. If a person should stand in each corner, while another stands in the hall, and all pull up the one thousand rings at one and the same time, the Castle will go down to the ground. So soon as it touches the earth, the edifice will be visible to all."

Some time after, while the Giant went out, the Princess took up a golden slipper which she had worn, and opening it, put a little scroll containing a minute description of the

life-principle of the Giant, and stitching the slipper partly, sat brooding over it in a very melancholy mood.

The Giant, on his return, finding the Princess in great grief, said, "Dear Varagun, soul of my soul, why are you so sad?"

Varagun replied, "Alas, this slipper is a present from my dear mother. I tore it to-day by an accident. I was eager to wear it on our wedding-day; but all my hopes have been blasted."

The Giant said, "If you have set your heart on this slipper to such an extent, I shall get it repaired for you this instant."

The Princess replied, "But the only person who knows how to repair it is my dear mother."

The Giant said, "Why, then, I shall see that it is repaired by your mother this instant." So the Giant went out with the slipper, in the disguise of a female slave, to have it mended at the palace of the King.

When the Queen saw the slipper, she concluded that it was from her beloved daughter. So she took it into her chamber, and carefully examining the inside, found the scroll. As soon as she finished reading it, she told the female slave, "Now, you may go, and return for the slipper about this time to-morrow." Then she laid the scroll before the King. His Majesty instantly set about searching for the toad in the great rock by his summer palace.

On returning to the Castle, the Giant said, "This evening I shall celebrate my wedding." Accordingly, he prepared a great feast. In the great central hall of the Castle, which was splendidly decorated for the occasion, a long table was laid out, covered with the choicest viands. On the side-board were the richest wines.

The nine hundred and ninety-nine maidens sat round the table with melancholy faces, and the Princess Varagun sat

by the Giant, on his right hand. After the dinner, the Giant rose to take the Princess by the hand, for the first time, as his wife. But scarcely had he lifted up his right hand for the purpose, when it fell from his shoulder.

Then the Giant lifted up his left hand, and it shared the same fate. In a few more seconds his whole body fell in various pieces on the floor. At each limb he lost the Giant roared louder than thunder, and the nine hundred and ninety-nine maidens trembled like the drops on a lotus leaf.

The Princess Varagun knew that the King, her father, had seized the toad and commenced the work of destroying it and the Giant at one and the same time. For the Giant had already pointed out that any injury inflicted on the toad was sure to affect him equally, and that when the toad perished he would be no more. So she stood firm.

When the Giant had been completely destroyed, the Princess and the nine hundred and ninety-nine young ladies threw out the pieces of his body and cleared the hall. Then Varagun explained to the nine hundred and ninety-nine maidens the secret of the thousand rings, and bade each stand at a corner and pull up the ring at a signal from her from the central ring.

They all pulled up the rings at one and the same time. The Castle moved slowly towards the capital city, and alighted on the ground in the royal gardens of the King of the Shan country, where it stands to this day.

The Princess Varagun gave a grand dinner to the nine hundred and ninety-nine virgins. The King and Queen presided at the feast, and there were rejoicings in honour of the event for many a day thereafter, not only in the city, but all over the Shan country.

The Prince observed, "It is remarkable that even giants should show a regard to royal personages, and treat them

respectfully. Why, the Giant of the Invisible Castle would not rest content till he had obtained a Princess for his presiding wife."

When the Prince had quite finished speaking, another Mandarin, after waiting for two minutes, stood up, and said, "Sire, the Emperor Mandarin, who ruled over the Island of Allfriars, had for his motto—'Nor sun may rise, nor sun may set, but men will have distinctions yet.' The same applies to giants as well."

The Prince exclaimed, "The Emperor Mandarin, who ever heard of such a title! The Island of Allfriars—where was it? Good and polite Mandarin, do introduce us at once to the august personage that you have referred to, and tell us all about the island also."

The Mandarin told the story as follows:—

The Story of the Island of Allfriars.

There was an Emperor of the Celestials in ancient times, who was so philanthropic in spirit, that one day he spoke to his Prime Minister as follows:—

"All human beings are born alike. They have hunger and other appetites and passions alike. When they die, they return alike to the dust of which they were made. Under these circumstances we see no reason why the manifold conventional distinctions—social and political—that prevail in communities, should be permitted to exist. So to-morrow issue an edict that at the end of three years hence there will be an equitable revision of rights, and that all the property in the Celestial Empire will be put together and apportioned equally among the many hundred millions that inhabit it."

The Prime Minister was surprised to hear his Majesty say so.

Before he could open his lips, the Emperor continued, "Of course, the potentates of earth generally copy our example, because we have been ordained by heaven to take the lead in every movement of importance. So when they perceive the equity of our plan, and the incalculable benefits that are sure to flow from it to mankind at large, they will do the same."

The Prime Minister essayed again to say something.

But his Majesty continued, "In course of time the whole world will be freed from those pernicious differences, which, under the various imaginary heads of wealth, rank, power, and pedigree, have handicapped the free progress of man towards perfection. As a preliminary step we abolish all titles and dignities in the Empire. The Empire itself shall be known in future as the Empire of Allfriars, every man being counted by the rest as a brother; for the title Celestial Empire indicates a superiority over the other Empires of the world, which we would not, in our philanthropy, tolerate."

The Prime Minister found it his duty to intercede.

But his Majesty continued, "We know that the title Mandarin is dear to the people, and that they will not part with it. So we make it general throughout our dominions. Every man shall bear the title, and we further illustrate our will on this point as follows:—Persons like merchants, bankers, farmers, shepherds, poulterers, scullions, scavengers shall henceforth be known as merchant mandarins, banker mandarins, shepherd mandarins, poulterer mandarins, scullion mandarins, and scavenger mandarins."

The Prime Minister, who was extremely alarmed to hear all that the Emperor had said, and whose feelings were specially outraged by the last two titles with which His

Majesty illustrated the sweeping character of his reforms, said, "It is impossible to controvert the decrees of the Imperial conscience and wisdom, yet I venture to suggest that the scheme may be tried on a small scale, and then propagated."

The Emperor agreed. So the Prime Minister brought before his Majesty six men without any distinctions among them as to wealth, rank, power, and pedigree, and addressed them as follows :—"In the Hoangho there is a little island which has long been uninhabited. You will repair to it, and live there on terms of perfect equity and equality. In fact, you are to lead such a free life of brotherly harmony and affection that each may give a highly satisfactory account of himself when his Imperial Majesty visits the island at the end of three years."

Here the Emperor asked the Prime Minister what name might be bestowed on the island.

He replied, "Your Majesty wished to bestow the name Empire of Allfriars on your Majesty's dominions. The same name, slightly modified, may be bestowed upon the island. It may be called the Island of Allfriars, as a tentative measure, of course."

The Emperor said, "It is, indeed, an appropriate name. The men will live like brothers all of them." Then turning to the men, his Majesty said, "You are to use no title among you. But if ever you should feel inclined to have one, address one another as Mandarin, as we have made it universal among our subjects."

His Majesty, who was eager to know how the men answered his expectations, was counting the days. At the end of three years he repaired to the island, with his Prime Minister, without giving any previous notice to the six inhabitants. Finding a hut at some distance from the shore, they climbed a tree and hid themselves in its foliage, intent

upon watching the movements of the people, the Emperor exclaiming, "Surely they have been leading a life of perfect equality and unity under one brotherly roof; for there is evidently but one hut on the island."

Scarcely had his Majesty finished speaking, when they saw a litter of bamboo canes borne on the shoulders of four men, while one sat upon it in great dignity, and another ran before him like a herald, holding a thick bamboo cane with a bunch of feathers suspended from the top in the form of a tassel, shouting at every step—"Ho, ho! hi, ho! hi, hing, ho! Here is the Emperor Mandarin of the Island of Allfriars! I am his Prime Minister Mandarin! These are his Bearer Mandarins! Nor sun may rise, nor sun may set, but men will have distinctions yet!"

The litter was gently placed on the ground before the hut, and the person on it walked in, while the four bearers sat outside, and the herald stood at the gate. The Emperor was astounded to see this spectacle. So he, with the Prime Minister, went to the hut, and asked each to give an account of himself.

They all pointed to the person that had gone into the hut, saying, "Sire, the Emperor Mandarin ought to speak first to your Majesty."

This puzzled his Majesty more. While he was wondering what the title meant, the Emperor Mandarin came out, and receiving his Majesty and the Prime Minister with the air of a potentate, said, "Your Majesty, with your Prime Minister, is welcome to my kingdom of the Island of Allfriars!"

His Majesty, being eager to know all about their doings on the island during the three years they were on it, asked him to relate at length every incident that had happened to them during the period.

The Emperor Mandarin said, "Sire, when we landed on

this island, each of us had a knife and an equal quantity of corn, and nothing more.

"One of us cut the branch of a tree with the knife, and making a wooden spade and hoe sowed a portion of the corn. The second man made a trap and caught a great many birds, which he put in a cage of his own making. The third man cut down a great quantity of wood and stored it up in a yard which he enclosed. The fourth collected a great quantity of the bark of trees, and set about preparing it for apparel.

"The fifth employed himself in helping each to build whatever he required.

"The sixth said, 'Each of you has been doing something after his own fashion. You want some one to look after these things when you are away in the woods or elsewhere. Further, doubts may arise among you as to the relative value of the commodities you wish to exchange. Various other questions will arise which a sixth man alone can well decide for you. What do you say to my looking after your affairs in that style? Of course, you will pay me for my trouble in the article which each has.'

"They all consented, saying that the proposal solved a problem and supplied a desideratum. I was the sixth man. Every day I had my fees for looking after their things while they were away, and for settling questions about barter and other transactions among them, while the fifth man built me a hut.

"Thus, I had corn, poultry, wood for fuel, bark for apparel, and a hut; whereas, each of the rest had but one or two things with him. So what with my hut, what with my varied store, I became the centre of the circle, and my hut the rendezvous of our little community. At first they called me Watchman Mandarin, then Agent Mandarin,

then Umpire Mandarin, then Lawyer Mandarin, then Judge Mandarin.

"When matters had advanced thus far, the crops of the Farmer Mandarin failed, because an inundation swept over his fields. The fox made a raid or two into his yard, and the Poulterer Mandarin lost his all. A fire caught the fuel stored by the Wood Mandarin, and he was a bankrupt. As the store of the Bark Mandarin was close by, it shared the same fate.

"The Builder Mandarin lost his means of living, because those who needed his services had failed. So all these were driven to the necessity of resorting to me for aid.

"I said, 'Now that you have been constrained to seek my help, I shall have to maintain you all. I shall, indeed, be happy to relieve you, if you will somehow make me a return for the aid I give you.'

"They replied, 'You know, we have nothing to give you; so the only manner in which we can hope to compensate you is by serving you—each in some capacity under your control.'

"'Ah,' said I, 'that would be creating distinctions, against which we have been specially cautioned by his Majesty and the Prime Minister.'

"But they, who were very hungry, for they had tasted nothing for a long time, impatiently exclaimed, 'Nor sun may rise, nor sun may set, but men will have distinctions yet. So relieve our wants instantaneously, and be our Emperor in future.'

"Then the Farmer Mandarin stepped forth, and said, 'call me your Prime Minister.'

"The remaining four said they would call themselves my subjects. I pointed out to them the necessity of adding Mandarin as a title common to all, to the office of each, according to your Majesty's injunctions. So I be-

came the Emperor Mandarin of the Island of Allfriars. The Farmer Mandarin is my Prime Minister Mandarin as well as the Police Mandarin, as will be evident from his bamboo *bâton* with the bunch of feathers on the top.

"The Poulterer Mandarin, the Wood Mandarin, the Bark Mandarin, and the Builder Mandarin are my subject Mandarins, and whenever I have to go out they bear my litter, which was made for me by the Builder Mandarin. Thus, as your Majesty sees, I have strictly observed your Majesty's injunction as to the universal title Mandarin, according it to every one of my subjects.

"Further, this hut I call my palace. The wooden bench within is my throne. The words engraved on the piece of bark on the top of the flagstaff there form my motto. As such, it is also the motto of the exalted Order of the Black Dragon, which I have had to create for the benefit of my subjects, and to which the Farmer Mandarin has been already admitted, because he was the first to recover, by his continued diligence, from the effects of the calamities that had happened one after another to my subjects."

Here the Emperor turned in the direction pointed out by the Emperor Mandarin, and found a long pole, which he had not noticed before, planted on the ground in front of the hut, with a piece of bark cut in the form of a long dragon flying on the top, bearing the words, "Nor sun may rise, nor sun may set, but men will have distinctions yet."

The Emperor Mandarin continued, "I have divided the Empire of the Island of Allfriars into four great provinces. My subject Mandarins have been long soliciting me to appoint each of them Governors of a province. Further, the other four, who have recovered from the effects of the calamities that had befallen them, have been soliciting the

honour of being admitted to the most exalted Order of the Black Dragon.

"To go through the double ceremony of appointing the Governors and installing the remaining four as members of the Order, I was on my way to my Court from another hut on that side of the island, which I call my summer palace, when your Majesty and the Prime Minister arrived."

The Emperor was, of course, lost in amazement at the turn which his scheme had taken. He returned to his capital, with his Prime Minister, without alluding any further to his philanthropic edict, exclaiming all the way, as often as the dignity of his position would permit, "Ah, all rivers must be of equal length and width, all mountains of equal height and bulk, and all seasons of equal temperature, before all men may live and move with equal wealth and privileges!"

As often the Prime Minister responded in the words of the motto of the Order of the Black Dragon, "Nor sun may rise, nor sun may set, but men will have distinctions yet!"

The Prince remarked, "It was, no doubt, a mistake on the part of his Imperial Majesty to have fancied that all men could continue to have the same rights and privileges without any distinctions whatever."

Here another Mandarin got up and said, "Sire, his Imperial Majesty was as much mistaken, when he fancied that all men could live and move equally without any distinctions whatever, as the nobleman Nowroze, of the Island of Ormaz, when he fancied that his affection towards his wife would ever continue as warm as it was at a particular period of time."

The Prince asked the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows :—

The Story of the Creeper of Lightning.

In the city of Ormaz, which was on an island of the same name in the Persian Gulf, there lived a youthful nobleman, named Nowroze, who once said to his wife, the fair lady Nourmahal, "My dear wife, I love you more than my life, and long to prove to you the truth of my assertion."

The lady Nourmahal said, "Ah, good husband, make no professions that you cannot well carry out. The proof of your attachment must be perceived in your conduct throughout life. So it is too early to say to your wife that you love her more than your life."

"No, good wife," said Nowroze, "you may try me as carefully as you can. I will stand the trial."

Nourmahal said, "Well, if you are in such earnest about it, I hope to test your fidelity to your wife ere long."

That day forward Nowroze paid greater attention to his wife than ever.

One day Nourmahal said to her husband, "I have not seen my parents for a long time past. You say you are very busy at present. So permit me to go to the house of my parents first, and have the pleasure of seeing you there, ere long."

Nowroze consented to this. So the lady Nourmahal left for the house of her parents, which was at some distance from the city.

The next evening, as Nowroze went into the apartments of his wife, to have a look at her picture, he saw a letter on the table by her bed, and opening it, found a miniature portrait of a young lady of remarkable beauty, and a letter, which read as follows:—

"Dear Cousin Nourmahal,—I have been longing to see you all this week; but no time. I shall positively call to-

morrow. Herewith I send you a copy of my portrait, which I painted with my own hands by observing my image in a mirror. In your last letter you ask very eagerly when I am to be married. My father has not yet fixed upon a suitable son-in-law. Nor have I any idea as to his identity. I would rather remain some time longer as I am. It is not every one that can be as fortunate as Nourmahal in attaining that universal desideratum of marriageable maids—a good husband!—With love, dear cousin, ever yours,

"Creeper of Lightning."

The last, of course, was the name of the lady.

Nowroze looked at the portrait again and again, and said to himself, "She is, indeed, a creeper of lightning! I doubt very much if a creeper of lightning has the brilliancy of the countenance of this lady. Her eyes have certainly more light in them than a thousand creepers of lightning put together! She is unmarried! She has not yet fixed upon a husband! She envies Nourmahal her husband!"

Here Nowroze carefully scanned himself from head to foot in a mirror, adjusted his whiskers, and came to the conclusion that he must try the effect of giving the lady an opportunity to see him, saying, "I will not love her; but will simply increase her misery by giving her an idea of my personal accomplishments."

Having thus introduced the thin end of the wedge into the impenetrable block of his affections, Nowroze waited patiently for the arrival of the lady. The next day, the lady arrived in a closely covered litter, borne on the shoulders of four sumptuously attired eunuchs, and on learning that her cousin Nourmahal was absent at her father's house, appeared to be highly disappointed.

Nowroze, for his part, was extremely attentive to her and her attendants. Although he had no opportunity of seeing her, according to the etiquette of his nation, as of many

another nation on earth, yet he showed in various other ways how assiduous he was in doing her the honours of the house. One of the eunuchs that accompanied the lady came to Nowroze and said, "My mistress is very sorry that her ladyship is absent. In her absence, she wishes at least to kiss her portrait in her apartments. May she do so?"

Nowroze consented with pleasure to the lady coming into the apartments of Nourmahal and kissing her portrait. By this time the heart and head of Nowroze were so roughly agitated by the presence of the Creeper of Lightning in the same house with him, that he said to himself, "Well, according to our law we can marry more than one wife at one and the same time. Now, if I should take another wife—not that I am actually going to do so—will my heart be any the less warm in loving my dear Nourmahal? No; for hearts are like flames, that go on augmenting their own heat and energy as they extend."

When he had arrived at this plausible conclusion, he paused for a moment, and said to himself, "Now, I have Nourmahal—that is my wife number one; suppose I make the Creeper of Lightning my wife number two. Ah! not that I am actually going to do so—but it is a mere supposition!"

So Nowroze waited with such conflicting thoughts till the lady entered the apartments of his wife, and then beckoning to the eunuch who accompanied her, said, in a whisper, "Ask the lady if she will accept me for her husband."

The eunuch went up to the lady, and, after a short conference with her, returned, saying, "My mistress is quite opposed to your proposal. She says she will be doing a great piece of injustice to her friend and cousin, Nourmahal, who has ever informed her that she was tenderly attached to you, and that you loved her dearer than your life."

Nowroze, who had by this time expelled from his mind

all scruples on the subject, replied, "No doubt I have spoken to my wife such words—but words are words, as you know. So let bygones be bygones, and let me know if the lady will or will not accept me."

The eunuch returned saying, "My mistress will marry you this moment, if your wife should give her consent."

Nowroze said, "If I had her by my side this moment I would make her consent at once to this proposal; but she is at her father's house."

Here the veiled figure, which Nowroze had fancied was some lady bearing the strange name of Creeper of Lightning, exclaimed, "Oh, no, dear husband, she is here, ready to give consent!"

It was the Lady Nourmahal that had spoken; for she it was that had painted the picture, written the letter, and come in that guise to test the worth of the professions which her husband had so persistently made to her. Nowroze was lost in amazement. In his confusion, he knew not what he said. So, he exclaimed, "Ah! What do I hear!"

The lady Nourmahal replied, "Good husband, it is the voice of thunder that you hear in your quest after the Creeper of Lightning!"

Poor Nowroze never after said to his wife, "I love you better than my life!" but by his conduct proved how much he loved and esteemed her. The lady readily forgave him, saying, "The worst of our frailties is fancying we have none."

They lived long in perfect happiness, highly respected and admired throughout the Island of Ormaz.

The Prince remarked, "After all, the lady Nourmahal revenged herself on her husband in the noblest way possible."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire,

the lady's revenge was like the revenge of the Royal Mendicant."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows :—

The Revenge of the Royal Mendicant.

In the days of the Tartar Conqueror, Zengis Khan, there were three small kingdoms in Central Asia, the Sultans of which were what are popularly known as "very good friends." Often they visited one another, and even exchanged very valuable presents. They were called Cobad, Janwar, and Fyzul respectively. The last was a very righteous man. He had, however, this fault—he fancied that the world always meant what it said, and took every one at his word. So he said, "I am the happiest man alive ; I have two Sultans of equal power and territory for my friends !"

The Grand Vizier of Sultan Fyzul, who had the highest respect for the character of his master, said, "Sire, friends are ever tested by adversity. If the craft of friendship weather the storm of adversity, it is, indeed, worth the name. So let the sincerity of these two allies be first tested by your Majesty."

Thereupon, Sultan Fyzul entrusted the government of his dominions to his faithful Vizier, and, in the disguise of a Mendicant, repaired to the capital of Sultan Cobad, and while he was going out of his palace for a ride, threw himself in his way, and, saluting him, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Ah, good friend Cobad, adversity has driven me out of my kingdom. If you will condescend to help me, I shall be able to retrieve my fortunes. If not, I shall be undone."

Cobad lifted up his riding-whip a trifle higher, in ac-

knowledgment of the salutation of Sultan Fyzul, and with a sombre face full of wisdom, silent lips full of caution, and uplifted eyebrows, that denoted a superior order of surprise and embarrassment, which Sultans alone could exhibit, gazed at the prostrate Sultan Fyzul for a long while, and then broke silence as follows:—

"Friendship can exist only between equals in every

"HE . . . THREW HIMSELF IN HIS WAY" (*p.* 198).

respect. You were Sultan Fyzul before—but you are nobody now. You had better therefore seek the relief you need from some person of inferior rank, suited to your present circumstances."

Then he rode off, saying, "I am, indeed, sorry for you, and wish I could do more in conformity with my rank and dignity."

When his Majesty had given expression to these admirable sentiments, and disappeared in the woods adjoining

his palace gardens, Sultan Fyzul left the place, and after a long journey sought the presence of Sultan Janwar.

He lent a patient ear to all that Sultan Fyzul said, and, with as much sophistry as inelegance, replied, "The choicest viands must go to the dunghill, and the choicest wines to the sewer, when they have been spoilt. So you must now mix with people better suited to your circumstances than Sultans, who were your friends before."

Then Sultan Janwar meditated for a while, and said, "If you have no objection, you may reside with the watchman of our palace, and receive the comforts which his home provides."

Sultan Fyzul said to himself, "Of the two friends I have, the second is, indeed, the better man. For he was so good as to say that I might reside with his watchman."

Then Sultan Fyzul returned to his capital, and applauded his Vizier for the very wise suggestion he had made.

Some time after, Zengis Khan invaded the dominions of Cobad and Janwar, because they had openly sheltered some of his rebellious subjects, who had fled to them for refuge, and drove the two Sultans out of their capitals.

With their families in disguise, they were constrained to flee into the adjacent kingdom of Sultan Fyzul, and presenting themselves before him, said, "O, Sultan Fyzul, when adversity frowned on you and drove you out of your dominions, we refused to help you. It was our folly that led us to do so. Now we have been constrained to seek shelter in your dominions, you may do with us what you like. Alas! in our reverses nothing serves us so well as the good offices we do to our friends; and nothing proves a greater stumbling-block than infidelity towards them."

When Sultan Fyzul heard all these wise things that the two fallen potentates uttered in his presence, he replied, with a very demure countenance, "So you have come to me after

all. I must have my revenge in full. Men like you should never be let off with impunity."

Here Sultan Fyzul paused, and Cobad and Janwar fancied he was collecting materials for a volley of the most powerful abuse from his armoury of offensive epithets, when he told his Grand Vizier, "Send each of these men with his family and children to a separate mansion in our capital, and see that he is well provided with all the comforts of life."

The Grand Vizier did so.

Sultan Fyzul paid each of them a visit every day, and at times brought over their children to play with his own in the palace.

Cobad and Janwar said to themselves, "Evidently Sultan Fyzul is treating us with a semblance of regard that he may murder us in our beds some night with his own hands, for nothing short of such direct revenge can gratify him."

So they never slept at night, but ever lay vigilant, in momentary expectation of death.

One evening Sultan Fyzul sent for both of them, with their wives and children, to his palace, where a sumptuous feast was laid out for them. After they had all partaken of it together, their wives and children being entertained in the inner apartment, by the Sultana, Sultan Fyzul spoke to them as follows:—

"Since your arrival at my court, I have been soliciting the great Zengis Khan, with whom—heaven be praised!—I stand on amicable terms, to pardon you, and restore you to your kingdoms, that your wives and children, who are, of course, as innocent as mine, and who, I am sure, have never shut their doors against their friends in adversity, may be happy again. This day the courier has arrived, bearing his written mandate complying with my request.

"I know you have been living here in constant fear of assassination. But therein you but paid the penalty due to your own suspicious hearts. You had to dread unkindness from others as you had never done a kindness—properly so called—to a friend. But henceforth be better men, and enjoy the happiness which virtue and benevolence alone can bestow. Now let me assure you that the Royal Mendicant, whom you turned away from your doors, has had his revenge in full!"

The Sultans Cobad and Janwar were quite overcome by this act of extraordinary forgiveness and benevolence. They rose together from their seats, with tears in their eyes, and, saluting his Majesty most reverentially, said, "Adversity has, indeed, been our monitor, as it has been the monitor of almost every individual on earth. We have learnt from it a lesson which we shall never forget. Nor shall we fail to profit by the revenge of the Royal Mendicant, on whom heaven shower its choicest blessings for ever!"

Here the children of the two Sultans came forward, and saluted his Majesty.

The wives of the two Sultans, who were in the inner apartments, exclaimed in an audible tone, "Sultan Fyzul, our brother, has made us happy again!"

His Majesty replied, "Ah, good sisters, see that your royal husbands turn away no helpless mendicant from their doors in future, be he royal or ordinary!"

The Prince remarked, "Sultan Fyzul illustrated the truth that forgiveness is the noblest revenge. At the same time, it may be added that forgiveness is the most effective revenge; for revenge leads to revenge, while forgiveness alone annihilates it completely."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire

forgiveness is the most efficacious antidote to that raging malady known as vindictiveness, even as love proved the most effective tamer of the wildness of the little Prince Ragoba."

The Prince, being curious to know all about Ragoba, requested the Mandarin to tell the story, and he proceeded with it as follows :—

The Story of Prince Ragoba and the Fair Pūchandy.

In a certain country not far from the Celestial Empire there was an ancient custom of training people, called Pūchandies, for the special purpose of frightening children when they proved troublesome. At times these people, in grotesque attire, with long feathers in their caps, and bells round their waists, went about the streets knocking at every door, and asking if there was any demand for their services.

If the housewife said, "Yes," they posted themselves at the gate, exclaiming, "We live together as bees in a hive; we take babies, and roast them alive; then in chariots drawn by elephants we drive!"

This incoherent jargon would frighten the little folk. If at the time they were indulging in their usual pastime of crying, then they would at once give it up, and run into the darkest corners of the house, and hide their little heads, vowing they would give their mammas no further trouble. At other times, when the children proved very refractory, the Pūchandies assumed the forms of hideous monsters to tame their wildness.

The King of the country had a son, a little Prince named Ragoba, whose lungs were so abnormally powerful that his

crying could be heard, as some of the courtiers said, at the very boundaries of his father's kingdom. It was, therefore, proposed to appoint a Pūchandy to keep the Prince in order. Accordingly, a great many Pūchandies, with great feathers in their caps, and huge bells in their belts, had a fair trial given them one after another.

Unfortunately for them all, the Prince had a heart which was as courageous as his voice was loud. He never had

"EVERY ONE . . . HAD TO BEAT A DISGRACEFUL RETREAT."

the slightest inkling from it of that fiend Fear, whom children know so well.

So every one of the Pūchandies had to beat a disgraceful retreat from the presence of the redoubtable Prince Ragoba.

But as the Prince was extremely troublesome, and as the Queen and the nurses who looked after him were ever worried by his pranks, her Majesty addressed the King as follows :—

"Ah, the Prince is growing more and more unmanageable every day. We have not had a wink of sleep in the

night. We can neither go to breakfast, nor dinner, nor supper with any hope of finishing the meal undisturbed. He breaks everything that comes in his way, strikes, bites, and kicks people without mercy. When told that his Pūchandy would soon come and take him away, he says he will treat him in the same style. Your Majesty must, therefore, take steps without delay to set him right."

The King at once assembled a council of his ministers, and laid the matter before them.

They said, "Sire, we have not yet given the Prince a good Pūchandy. He must have one at once. We propose that three of us disguise ourselves as three monster Pūchandies, and frighten the Prince one after another."

The King assented.

Of the three ministers who had agreed to undertake the taming of Prince Ragoba, the first assumed the form of a huge elephant, and, with waving ears and uplifted trunk, approached the Prince, with one foot raised on high, as though he meant to trample him down at a tread.

The Prince advanced towards his adversary with a steady step, and, taking hold of his trunk, gave it such a twisting that it fell to pieces, for it was made of pasteboard.

The Prince laughed heartily over it, and the discomfited elephant fled to some forest, from which he said he had come for the special purpose of rectifying the conduct of Prince Ragoba.

The King and Queen, the nurses, and other servants of the palace, who were watching the scene from a distance behind a screen, roared with laughter.

The second minister assumed the form of a black lion, with flowing mane and frightful claws, and roaring louder than thunder, presented himself before the Prince. Instantly the Prince fell on all-fours, and stalking like another

lion went up to his adversary, and, putting his nose to his, gave such a tremendous roar that the other beat a hasty retreat to some wood in a distant glen, from which he said he had come for the special purpose of rectifying the conduct of Prince Ragoba. There were roars of laughter again behind the screen.

It was now the turn of the third minister. He assumed the form of a flying dragon, with crested head and claws outspread, and presented himself before the Prince, spitting fire and performing various rapid evolutions with his long, forked tongue. Not all the children in the world put together could have so much as endured the sight of the horrid monster.

But Prince Ragoba at once ran to the kitchen, and snatching a flaming brand, returned saying, "Now, Pūchandy, here I am; will you have a fight with me?"

The dragon found out that his adversary was determined to set fire to him if he ventured to advance a step further towards him. So he beat a hasty retreat to some dark cave in a distant mountain, from which he said he had come for the special purpose of rectifying the conduct of Prince Ragoba.

The Queen and all the nurses and other servants of the palace who were concerned in the affair were in absolute despair when they found that there was no kind of Pūchandy who could tame the wildness of Prince Ragoba. At the same time the Queen was opposed to all employment of physical force in bringing him to his senses. "For," she said, "if you touch my Ragoba with a blade of grass, I shall feel it as though I had been beaten with a club."

The King said, "Neither elephants with uplifted trunk, nor lions roaring louder than thunder, nor dragons spitting fire will do as Pūchandies any more. We must, therefore, get a Pūchandy of a different type altogether."

So he sent for little Jollima, who was the daughter of his sister, the Queen of a neighbouring country, and whom the Prince had never seen before, and said, "Ragoba, here is a Pūchandy whom you cannot easily send away. Now, what do you say?"

When Ragoba saw Little Jollima, her innocent smiles, her charming looks, and her amiable disposition at once prepossessed his heart.

So he gave up his turbulent ways and went to play with her. In the course of a few days he contracted the habit of doing everything in his power to please little Jollima. She exercised a wonderful influence over him—ay, the influence which every innocent and amiable soul is capable of exercising over those that seek its company.

The Queen and all the nurses and other servants, who were concerned in the affair, and who were before in absolute despair, were now perfectly happy. So the King proposed to send Jollima back to her parents.

But Prince Ragoba said, "If you take Jollima away from me, I will strike, I will bite, I will kick, I will cry, and make you sore as ever before. But if you keep Jollima with me you need bring no more Pūchandy!"

The story goes on to say that the King did keep Jollima with the Prince. That they played together for years, as long as play alone could amuse them, that then they loved each other, and became eventually King and Queen of the country. King Ragoba was ever fond of saying, "The best Pūchandy I had was my beloved Jollima. She accomplished in my case what elephants, lions, and dragons failed to do. Ah, yes, when all else faileth, love availeth!"

The children of the country, who are familiar with the story to this day, play at "Ragoba and Pūchandy," enacting the scenes in it one after another, and concluding with the scene in which Ragoba tells his father that he would revive

all his wildness and mischief if the fair Jollima should be taken away from him.

The Prince remarked, "The amiable disposition of little Jollima tamed the wildness of Prince Ragoba. This was, no doubt, an instance of a thing being cured by its contrary."

Another Mandarin stood up and said, "Sire, to bring certain things to existence, we have often to employ their contraries—even as the Prince Vikrama made his wife weep to do himself the pleasure of witnessing the cascade of pearls that fell from her eyes."

The Prince said, "Good Mandarin, she must have indeed been a wonderful lady from whose eyes fell a cascade of pearls when she wept. Do relate the story without any further delay."

The Mandarin proceeded with it as follows :—

The Story of Vāmā Vikrama; or, The Cascade of Pearls.

In the fair Province of Cashmere there was a picturesque little lake with an island in the middle. On this island was a wood of aromatic trees. In the wood was a bower, wherein lived a fairy named Vāmā. She seldom smiled, but when she did smile, the trees and plants around her blossomed. She seldom wept, but when she did weep a cascade of pearls fell from her eyes.

Her abode was called by the people the Enchanted Island, and the lake the Enchanted Lake. If any got into a boat or other craft to reach the island, he felt such an eager thirst as compelled him to drink the water. So soon

as he drank it he became a crocodile and fell into the lake, where he mingled with others, who had turned crocodiles in similar enterprises before him.

A great many people had thus been lost in the lake. Further, when any person appeared in a boat or raft, the crocodiles were so jealous of him that they strove to capsize his craft.

In the country of Nepaul there was a Prince called Vikrama, who had heard of the fairy Vāmā. He said to himself, "The fairy must, indeed, be willing to wed some one worthy of her. The obstacles in the way to her bower are, of course, intermediate. Probably she has no control over them. So I must somehow reach the bower."

With this resolve he went to a sage in the Himalaya Mountains, and asked him for some means of travelling in the air.

The sage gave him a pair of shoes, and said, "If you put on these shoes, shut your eyes, and think of the place that you wish to reach, you will be there."

That evening, when the full moon rose in splendour over the snowy mountains, he put on the shoes, and shut his eyes, wishing to be at the fairy's bower. He was there. The fairy was sitting pensively on a bank of white roses, looking at the moon from time to time, and sighing.

Prince Vikrama approached her with great courtesy, and said, "Fair Vāmā, I am Vikrama, Prince of Nepaul. I have long loved you dearer than my life. If you do not love me tell me so, that I may this moment terminate my existence. For life without you will be no life to me, and I assure you this is no hypocrisy."

The tender and sincere appeal which Vikrama thus made to her heart at once melted it, and she smiled so happily that all the trees and plants around her were at once covered with blossoms. What with the moonlight, what

with the fragrance of flowers, the scene became very delightful and romantic. The fairy gave her hand in marriage to Vikrama, and the two lived for some time happily on the island.

The first care of the Prince, after the wedding, was to solicit the fairy to break the spell which had transformed the men into crocodiles.

"THE FAIRY WAS SITTING PENSIVELY" (*p.* 209).

The fairy said, "My father, who lives in the Himalayas, created this island for my abode by the power of enchantment, and said: 'Let that man wed my child who finds out the means of reaching the island without crossing the waters of the lake. Let those that attempt to cross the lake remain transformed into crocodiles till I release them from the spell.'"

Scarcely had Vāmā finished her words, when the sage, who had given Prince Vikrama the magic shoes, descended from the sky.

The fairy ran to meet him with open arms, exclaiming "Father! You have come after all!"

The sage, pronouncing a benediction on the fairy and her husband, said, "Prince Vikrama, this is my daughter. You are my son. You deserved her. For that reason I put myself in your way, and supplied you with the means of reaching the island. Live happily with your wife for long, long years to come, and let the love of Vāmā-Vikrama be celebrated by the royal bards of Nepaul in glowing verse!"

Then the sage turned to the waters of the lake, and pronounced some mystic words. Instantly, the men, who had been floating in the form of huge crocodiles, regained their natural shapes, and swam ashore.

"My son," said the sage, addressing the Prince, "if I had not guarded the island so carefully by the aid of magic, my daughter would have had no rest in her abode. Every clown in the country would have aspired for her hand. For to attain what is fair becomes every man's care." Here the sage pronounced another benediction on the happy couple, and disappeared.

The Prince said to himself, "I have seen the smile of Vāmā and its wonderfully delightful effects. Now I must see the cascade of pearls." So he said to her, "Dear Vāmā, I have come away from my parents abruptly. They have been, no doubt, lamenting my absence bitterly. So permit me to go home for a week."

"Dear husband," said Vāmā, "I give you permission to do so. Just take this memento with you for my sake."

Here she put into his hand a beautiful white rose, which he received with every mark of affection and esteem. But at the same time the Prince was extremely surprised and disappointed. Vāmā had often told him that she could not live for one moment without him; that if ever he was separated from her, she would count it the greatest calamity

So the Prince thought that if he asked her to let him go, she would weep, and give him an opportunity of witnessing the wonderful cascade of pearls.

But, as he had taken leave of Vāmā for a week, he put on his magic shoes, and was in the Palace of the King of Nepaul—his father. He gave an account to his parents of all that he had done.

They said, "Dear son, we are, indeed, happy to see you again safe. But our happiness would have been tenfold if you had brought your wife with you!"

After spending the greater part of the day with his parents, he retired to his own apartments, when what was his astonishment to see his wife—the gentle fairy Vāmā—there, reclining pensively on a cushion, as when she sat on the bank of white roses, when the Prince first saw her in the Enchanted Island!

Vikrama flew towards her with open arms, exclaiming, "My love, when did you come here? and how?"

"Dear husband, you said you would never part with me. But yet you asked my permission to leave the island for a week. As your heart had grown so indifferent to me, I did not wish to gainsay its wishes. But I could not live without you. So the moment you left the island I left it also, and reached our apartments in the palace, where I have been since eagerly expecting you. Of course I need hardly repeat that I have been thinking of you with a yearning heart every moment since we parted. Now, let me see how often you have thought of me since. For every time you thought of me a petal would have disappeared in the rose I gave you. It is one of those magic white roses growing on the bank on which you saw me seated when first we met. So, dear husband, let me see the rose."

The Prince knew that since taking leave of her that morning he had not once thought of her with a yearning

heart. So he produced the flower with a trembling hand. Of course every petal of it was in perfect order.

Instantly the fairy wept, saying, "Alas! dear husband, you were in my heart all the day, while I failed to be with you even once!" and a cascade of pearls fell from her eyes.

The Prince was as deeply affected by the tenderness of his wife's affection as astonished by the size and beauty of the pearls that fell from her eyes. So he embraced her with sincere love, and said, "Dear wife, I think heaven made me forget you for a while to-day that I might have the pleasure of witnessing this marvellous cascade of pearls. Never more, Vāmā, shalt thou be absent from my mind for the twinkling of an eye!"

The fairy was gratified with the explanation and the pledge. Vikrama presented her to the King and Queen—his parents, and their joy at seeing their daughter-in-law was boundless. The loving couple lived long in perfect happiness. When Vikrama became King of Nepaul, Vāmā became his Queen—the warmth and sincerity of their affection giving rise to the saying "As loving as Vāmā-Vikrama!"

The Prince remarked, "Vikrama must have indeed been surprised to see his wife in his apartments, when all the while he had been under the impression that she was on the Enchanted Island."

Before the Prince could proceed further, another Mandarin stood up and said, "Sire, he must have been as much surprised as the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, of Bagdad, when he saw himself in the apartments of the virgin from Circassia, through a stratagem of his fool, Shum Sheer."

The Prince said, "We have all heard of this famous Caliph who ruled over the Saracens. But not one of us

has ever heard the story referred to by you, good Mandarin. Be so good as to gratify our curiosity without further delay."

The Mandarin proceeded with the story, as follows :—

The Story of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid and his Fool, Shum Sheer.

Zobeide was the favourite Queen of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid. In the midst of the many acts of affection and courtesy which they did to each other, there were occasional differences, which, as the Caliph observed, gave the highest zest to their happiness.

Once the Caliph said, "Men are more truthful than women."

Zobeide at once replied, "It is more easily said than proved. My own opinion is the other way. I am prepared to prove that women are more truthful than men."

"Well," said the Caliph, "till you prove it, let there be a cessation in our happy intercourse, with this condition, that the one of us should yield as being in error who enters the apartments of the other, whether wittingly or unwittingly."

"Agreed!" said the Queen.

But as neither the Caliph nor the Queen found it easy to demonstrate the proposition enunciated by each, they continued without seeing each other for a good many days. The Caliph felt eager to see the Queen, but held back, saying, "The world will remark that, after all, the Commander of the Faithful yielded to a woman — Zobeide though she be."

The Queen felt eager to see the Caliph; but being too high spirited to yield, avoided him, saying, "The world will remark that Zobeide tarnished the honour of her sex simply because she was in a hurry to see her husband—Commander of the Faithful though he be."

This alarmed the ministers of his Majesty. They held a council, with the Grand Vizier at their head, and said, "The might of the world is represented by the Commander of the Faithful, and Zobeide represents all the mercy in it. If the two fail to work in unison, the efficacy of the one is as much impaired as the exercise of the other is uncontrolled. We have, therefore, to devise some means of bringing the two together."

The Grand Vizier said, "The Caliph shuts himself up in his apartments, and seldom permits any of us to approach him. So there is evidently some difficulty in accomplishing our object."

One of the Fools of the Caliph, who was known by the name of Shum Sheer, or The Scimitar—a name which the Caliph had bestowed upon him in recognition of some of his cutting jokes and repartees, said, "Ye are wise men; so ye fear to approach the Caliph. But I am a fool, and as such free from all fear. So leave the business to me."

The Grand Vizier asked Shum Sheer, with a smile, what reward he expected for his trouble.

Now this Shum Sheer was a great favourite of the Caliph. He had the extraordinary privilege of addressing him as the Commander of the Faithless. As often as he addressed the Caliph by that strange title, his Majesty would ask him, with a smile, why he applied it to him, and the Fool would invariably reply, "Sire, your Majesty is, indeed, the Commander of the Faithful. At the same time, your Majesty is lord of a great many fair women in your harem. Now, women, as your Majesty often com-

plains, are faithless. So I have every reason to call your Majesty Commander of the Faithless also!"

The Caliph would laugh, and would approve of the epithet which the Fool applied to the sex, exclaiming, "Indeed, they are faithless!"

Shum Sheer had the privilege of committing a hundred faults with impunity. The Caliph invariably punished him for the one hundred and first fault, with his own hands, by simply touching him with a long bar of gold, and handing it over to him as a compensation for the injury which he was supposed to have sustained by the chastisement. Finding this mode of chastisement highly advantageous, Shum Sheer often endeavoured successfully to exceed the limits of impunity, and carried off the prize.

So, in reply to the Grand Vizier's query, Shum Sheer said, "If your Excellency gets an order passed that I should be chastised for every eleventh fault, in lieu of the one hundred and first, in future, I shall consider myself amply rewarded for my pains."

The Grand Vizier promised to have the order issued if Shum Sheer played his part successfully, while the other ministers observed, with a smile, that Shum Sheer was about the only person who within their knowledge had ever courted chastisement oftener than the Commander of the Faithful had intended!

So the Fool presented himself before the Caliph, and said, "Commander of the Faithless, after all she has come!—the Circassian beauty with gazelle eyes, tulip cheeks, coral lips, arched brows, jet-black hair, and a girdle of the purest gold on a costume of the richest white!"

The Caliph, whose curiosity was ever roused when people spoke to him of beauties, wished to know all about the Circassian.

Shum Sheer said, "Commander of the Faithless, a

wealthy nobleman of Bassora was long in quest of the most beautiful woman in Circassia. After all he found her, and having purchased her for a million pieces of gold, is now on his way home with the prize. Bagdad is a stage in his journey; so he spends a day here, and will be away to-morrow."

Instantly the Caliph rose from his seat, and bade Shum Sheer lead him to the place where the beauty was.

Shum Sheer said, "I have been told that the woman, who is somewhat whimsical, has ruled that those who wish to be introduced to her must travel to her abode blindfolded, and, on approaching, pledge to her eternal love and fidelity."

The Caliph said, "I have known women more whimsical in my days. The easiest way with them is to comply with their whims. So blindfold me this very instant, and lead me to her."

So Shum Sheer blindfolded the Caliph with a kerchief. Then he led the Caliph slowly over a great many halls, which he called streets, and finally made him stop before a door which, he said, looked like the gate of a houri's mansion. The Caliph said he longed to enter at once.

The Fool said, "Sire, you will not forget the required pledge, I am sure."

"Oh, no," said the Caliph, "never fear. I will swear to her such fidelity as never man pledged to woman."

"That is it!" said the Fool, and opening the door, said, "Madam, here is the Commander of the Faithless. I have brought him to your door."

Within was seated Zobeide, in a pensive attitude, brooding over the rash vow she had taken not to see the Caliph till he should yield. When she saw him thus brought to her chamber blindfolded, she was beside herself with surprise and joy.

The Fool, however, signed to her not to speak, and whispered into the ears of the Caliph, "Sire, the lady stands before you; now render your pledge."

The Caliph said, "Madam, I love you dearer than my life, and pledge eternal fidelity to you, with all my heart!"

Here Shum Sheer disappeared.

Zobeide imagined that the Caliph craved her forgiveness, and that he came blindfolded to avoid shame. So she

"HIS MAJESTY WAS SURPRISED."

exclaimed, "I forgive your Majesty with all my heart; for I am ever your Majesty's affectionate wife and companion, Zobeide!"

So saying, she untied the kerchief with which Shum Sheer had blindfolded the Caliph. His Majesty was no less surprised to find himself there. He was also overjoyed to see that the Fool, Shum Sheer, had solved the difficulty. So he laughed, and Zobeide joined him in his laughter. After their Majesties had laughed over the whole affair for one whole day, they sent for the Grand Vizier, and asked him to bestow on Shum Sheer the reward he desired.

As this had been already settled, there was no difficulty in satisfying him. Shum Sheer acquired the privilege of being chastised for every eleventh fault, and took care to be more faulty than ever; and as often as he carried home the bars of gold, exclaimed, "What a precious penalty!"

The Prince remarked, "The Caliph Haroun Alraschid was one of the most powerful potentates of his time. It was unbecoming on his part to have permitted himself to be blindfolded by his Fool, Shum Sheer; although it has to be added, in extenuation of the Fool's fault, that the end justified the means to a great extent."

Here another Mandarin stood up and said, "Sire, be they high or low, when people do things not suited to their position and circumstances, they are sure to come to grief like the boy Big Turban."

The Prince desired the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Story of the Boy Big Turban.

In a certain city of the Celestial Empire there was a little boy named Big Turban, who longed to do very much as big people did. Instead of a cap, he wore a great turban. Instead of being sportive and gay, he put on a very serious countenance. Instead of seeing with his bright little eyes, he saw through a pair of spectacles. Instead of keeping his breath pure and sweet, he had a long pipe in his mouth, which he constantly filled and adjusted, with an air of extreme importance.

A fairy, who observed his ways, said to him, "Sir, you have a turban; you are not gay; you wear spectacles, and you smoke a pipe. You are just the man I want. For my

husband deserted me with two babies, and I have been in quest of another whom I might marry." Here the fairy pointed to two big babies in her arms, which she called her own.

Big Turban was delighted to hear the fairy address him "Sir," and call him a "man"; so, with a smile, he said, "I seldom smile—well knowing that it is a breach of good manners to do so; but I cannot but express in that style my pleasure at the very great politeness with which you have addressed me. What can I do for you?"

"What can you do for me?" said the fairy. "My dear sir, why you can do everything for me!—Now, marry me at once!"

Big Turban married the fairy on the spot.

Instantly the fairy handed over her two babies to Big Turban, saying, "Henceforth you must carry the babies, because you are my husband, and they are our children!"

The little arms of Big Turban could hardly hold one of the babies, who, as he subsequently complained, was as heavy as a pig. But he was eager to prove to his wife that, though a boy in years and appearance, he was more than a man in spirit. So he told the fairy to go in advance, proposing to follow with the babies.

The fairy went in advance. Big Turban put one baby down, and carrying the other some distance with great difficulty, laid it down, and retracing his steps, took up the other baby and carried it to the spot where the first baby had been left, and moved on, continuing the process.

The fairy observed that he was not able to carry the two babies at one and the same time, so she turned round and said, "My dear husband, may I carry one of the babies?"

The title, "My dear husband," which the fairy bestowed upon him made Big Turban almost giddy with

'"MY DEAR HUSBAND, MAY I CARRY ONE OF THE BABIES?'" (*p.* 220).

delight. Further, he did not wish to produce an impression on the mind of his wife that he was unequal to the task of carrying the burden which he had imposed on himself.

So he said, "No, good wife, it is not out of lack of physical power that I carry baby after baby—it is simply an amusement that I have proposed to myself. Indeed, if I choose, I can carry twenty babies like these as if they were so many mice."

So the fairy went in advance, and Big Turban followed with the babies as before.

But soon he found it impossible to carry even one baby at a time. He felt his feet staggering, and his muscles as though they would crack.

"Ah," said Big Turban, "I was a boy. Then I became a man. Then a husband. Then a carrier of babies. If I had known that a husband had to carry babies I would never have become a husband. If I had known that a man had to be a husband I would never have become a man!"

Then he walked a few more steps, and said, "Now, let me see: if I tell her I cannot carry the babies, it will be an open confession of weakness. If I continue to carry them, why I shall split, and fall to pieces!"

When he had finished uttering these words, he came to the conclusion that the best course to pursue would be to drop down the babies, together with his turban, his spectacles, and his pipe, which he had smoked all the way, and fly from the spot before the fairy could know of it.

Accordingly, he had laid the babies gently on the ground, and had half divested himself of his huge turban, when the fairy turned round and said, in an angry tone, "Now, what are you doing there, my husband?"

Poor Big Turban's heart sank within him. He looked

round as though he were ready to leap into a well, if one presented itself before him.

The fairy came up to him, and roughly taking hold of his hand, said, "Do you mean to desert me like my first husband? You shall not. While I was his wife I had two eyes, but now I have twenty!"

Big Turban knew not what to say in reply. His boyish instincts prevailed. So, with piteous sobs, he laid his turban, his spectacles, and his pipe at the feet of the fairy, saying, "Take these away, and let me go!"

"But you are my husband. When will you come back to me?" said the fairy.

Big Turban disengaged himself from her hold, and ran away, exclaiming, "Not till I shall be better able to carry babies!"

Nor did he turn behind to see what had become of his wife and her two babies.

The Prince remarked, "After all, the fairy must have let off her husband out of contempt."

Before he could proceed further another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Whether it was out of contempt or not, the fairy knew that much would not result from her endeavours to keep him, even as the Tartar Khan found out that it would be of no great advantage to him to strive to gain possession of the Persian Princess Fair Blossom."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it, as follows:—

The Fair Cavaliers.

There was a Tartar Khan who conquered a great many countries, and ruled over them with unbounded sway. But

there was one province, in the north of Persia, which long resisted his authority.

The ruler of this province, who was descended from the great Kusru, or Cyrus, went by the name Feroze, and he had a fair and accomplished daughter, who bore a name which, in the Persian language, meant "Fair Blossom."

The Tartar Khan heard of the beauty and accomplishments of Fair Blossom, and resolved that she should become one of his numerous wives. So he assembled a large army, and advancing into the territory of Feroze, laid it waste on all sides, sending an ultimatum to the chieftain in these terms, "Either send your daughter to us, and yield implicit obedience to our sway, or be destroyed with all your people, for we have decided that no mercy shall be shown to you on this occasion."

Feroze assembled his councillors, and laid the ultimatum before them. They, with that courage and dignity which characterised the ancient nobility of Persia, said, "Sire, we will follow you to the very gates of death's mansion in your contest with the foe. Depend upon our valour and fidelity, and hurl back the ultimatum at the face of the barbarian who sent it."

Accordingly, Feroze sent his family, including his daughter, to a place of safety, and gave battle to the Tartars. Although he and his heroic troops performed prodigies of valour, the numbers and strategy of the Tartar Khan prevailed, and Feroze, with a great many of his followers, was taken prisoner.

When he was taken before the Tartar Khan, the latter observed, "I have been, till now, courting your daughter at the point of the sword. Now that I have got you into my power, may I lay it by, and call you my father-in-law?"

Feroze replied, "You have, no doubt, got my body

into your power, but not my spirit. That is as powerfully opposed to you and the detested alliance you propose as ever!"

Instantly Feroze and his officers were put into chains, and carried off to the Khan's capital, where they were confined in cells, into which, people said, everything entered but light and air.

When Fair Blossom heard of the calamity that had befallen her father, she said to herself, "My father is a descendant of the great Kusru. I have his blood in my veins. What if I am a woman? Courage springs up in hearts, and I have a heart!"

So she assembled all the officers of her father that yet remained in the province, and laid the matter before them.

But they said that it was hopeless to contend against the overwhelming numbers of the Tartars. Thereupon Fair Blossom, with one hundred followers, whom she called her maids, marched on horseback towards the capital of the Khan.

On arriving at the gates of the city, Fair Blossom sent the following message to his barbarian majesty:—

"On second thought, I have come to the conclusion that I cannot get a better husband on earth than the great Khan of the Tartars, before whom the whole world trembles. I have therefore come to yield implicit obedience to his will, and contribute to his happiness to the best of my humble powers. But, before joining his harem, I beg permission to see my parent Feroze in his prison."

The Tartar Khan was very glad that after all Fair Blossom had the good sense to appreciate his love, and return it in that style. So he permitted her, with the fair cavaliers that accompanied her, to go to the prison and see her father first, issuing orders, at the same time, to the

officers of his palace to prepare for the reception of Fair Blossom.

When Fair Blossom and the fair cavaliers, her maids, entered the prison, the guards were ordered to go out; and the hundred maids who accompanied her threw off their veils, when lo! instead of turbans and petticoats, they had helmets and coats of mail, with scimitars and shields, and wrinkles and whiskers, that struck terror into the hearts of the bravest. They were, in fact, a trusty band of her father's veterans, whom Fair Blossom had brought in the guise of maids for the rescue of her father.

His chains and the chains of his officers were instantly struck off, and he, his daughter, the officers, and the hundred veterans, after slaying as many of the guards as came in their way, rode off in the direction of their province in Persia with such rapidity that the cavalry of the Tartar Khan could not overtake them.

The Khan made no more endeavours to get Fair Blossom into his harem; for he contented himself with saying, "It really is not worth one's while to fight for a woman in this style!"

The Prince remarked, "Fair Blossom was indeed a great heroine. She accomplished by her courage and skill what the officers of her father that were left behind, and that were tried veterans, perhaps, failed to attempt. It is indeed a pleasure to see the weak triumphing over the tyrants who unjustly oppress them."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, it is indeed a pleasure to see the weak triumphing over their oppressors, even as the Lame Sultan triumphed over the Goblin that carried off his sister Pakima."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Lame Sultan.

In the country of the Seljuks there were three boys, who had a little sister named Pakima. The youngest of the boys was lame, but he was a very clever little fellow.

He directed his brothers in their sports, although he could not take an active part in them. So, whenever they had to go from place to place, the two brothers carried him on their shoulders together with a bag, which he ever took with him, and which was so wonderfully made that anything and everything could be put into it without increasing its bulk or weight. The brothers called him their dear little Lame Sultan, and his bag the Wonderful Magic Bag.

One fine morning in the spring they went out gathering flowers in the fields. One of the blossoms was very fine and large. Little Pakima went to pluck it; but it moved from its place. As Pakima followed the flower it went further and further, eluding her grasp, till she left her brothers at a great distance behind her.

She turned round, and finding none of her brothers near, cried, "Oh, when shall I see my brothers again?"

"When you shall have kept house for me for a year and six months!" said a great Goblin, leaping out of the blossom.

Poor Pakima was terrified to see the monster. But he took her up on his shoulders and strode on in the direction of the mountains which lifted up their lofty peaks in the distant horizon.

The three brothers saw him carry off their sister, although they were at a great distance. They shouted after him; but he pretended not to hear their cries, saying to himself with a laugh, "I will roast you little urchins for my wedding breakfast."

The Goblin said this in a whisper; but the words

sounded like thunder in the ears of the brothers. So they concluded that he was going to marry their little sister, and that the wedding breakfast would come off on that day.

This alarmed the two brothers more. So they ran after the Goblin, leaving the Lame Sultan behind. But before they could proceed some distance the Goblin reached the

"POOR PAKIMA WAS TERRIFIED" (*p.* 228).

base of the mountains, and planting one foot on their top, as if he were going up a stile, drew the other after him, and disappeared with little Pakima into a great cave, which he called his castle.

The two brothers, with tears in their eyes, retraced their steps to the spot where they had left the Lame Sultan, who, instead of weeping, was smiling as though he were very happy. So they said, "How now, dear brother, you seem to feel no concern whatever at all that has happened?"

But he replied, "I am glad for one moment that the Goblin did not turn round and take you also on his

shoulders. I am sorry, of course, that Pakima has been taken away. But, dear brothers, there is no good in tears. Weeping is out of keeping with success."

"Oh, what shall we do, then?" said the two brothers.

"Now go home and bring my bag," said the Lame Sultan.

So they brought him his bag.

"Now carry me towards the castle of the Goblin on the mountains," said he; and they trudged on towards the mountains, with their brother on their shoulders.

On the way there was an indigo vat. The Lame Sultan bade his brothers fill a barrel with the indigo juice, and put it into his bag. Then there was the trunk of a great palm tree lying by the road, and he ordered them to thrust it into the same. Then they saw an ass on a meadow, and the Lame Sultan ordered him also into his capacious bag.

When they reached the foot of the mountains the Lame Sultan observed a string of black ants marching from one cavern to another, and ordered a good number of them into his bag, while the brothers wondered what he wanted the indigo juice, the palm tree, the ass, and the black ants for!

When they had reached the castle of the Goblin, Pakima said, "Dear brothers, I am so glad you have come. The Goblin is out. Now get into the loft through the trap-door in the ceiling."

So they got into the loft just as the Goblin got into his castle, and said, "Pakima, I smell human beings; are there any here?"

"Yes, there are!" said the Lame Sultan from above.

The Goblin said, "Pakima, you know I proposed bringing your brothers, and roasting them for our wedding breakfast, on the day of our marriage—a year and six months hence—when you shall have satisfied me with your

housekeeping. But I see we have one to-day, as good luck would have it!"

The Lame Sultan replied, "Not one, but three, as good luck would have it!"

"Pray what are your names?" said the Goblin, with a grin.

"Blue Spit, Long Leg, and Loud Music," said the Lame Sultan.

"Now let us see Blue Spit," said the Goblin.

Instantly the Lame Sultan emptied the barrel on his head, saying, "Do you wish to see the mouth that spits on you?"

"Now let us see Long Leg," said the Goblin, with great concern.

The Lame Sultan held out the palm tree through the trap-door, saying, "This is but a toe. Do you wish to see the whole foot and the leg?"

The Goblin hastened to the door of his castle, and with one foot in the open air, said, "Ah, that must indeed be the largest leg! Now let me hear Loud Music, and I shall have done!"

Instantly the Lame Sultan let the black ants run into the ears of the ass, and he roared louder than thunder.

The Goblin put his other foot out, and without turning behind, ran away, exclaiming, "One goblin against three such monsters is bad odds indeed!"

The Lame Sultan and his two brothers led their sister, little Pakima, triumphantly home. The Goblin was never heard of in that part of the world thereafter; and the three brothers and their little sister gathered flowers in the fields during many a spring thereafter, with their friends, in perfect peace and security.

The Prince remarked, "The Lame Sultan was not a man

of words, but quite a man of action. He spake but so much as was absolutely necessary. No man ever got anything by repining. The Lame Sultan was aware of this; hence he was more successful than his brothers."

When the Prince had followed this remark with an important Hem! and again settled himself to tranquillity, another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, just as men eat a great deal more than nature requires, they speak a great deal more than the subject of discourse actually needs. Even as we have some men who eat in moderation and keep up their health and strength in perfect order, we have had some men who never spoke more than was absolutely necessary for the subject at hand, like Prince Jubal, of the Laconic Tartars."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to proceed with the story, and he proceeded with it as follows :—

Prince Jubal—the Man of Brevity.

In Mongolia there were, at one time, three Khanates in a line along the Sagalean. The people of the first bore a name which meant the Laconic Tartars, because they generally gave very brief replies to queries addressed to them. The Khan who ruled over these people had a son named Jubal, who was reported the most laconic of his laconic race.

The people of the second Khanate were known as the Central Tartars. Their Khan had a daughter named Danima, who was known as the most beautiful and accomplished of her sex in those parts.

The people of the third Khanate were known by a name which meant the Voluble Tartars, for they generally employed a great many words to express even the

simplest and most ordinary things. Thus, if a stranger asked one of this race, "What is your name?" he would reply, "Ah, it is a source of extreme gratification to me, as it is to every other member of my race, to answer this query. One makes a friend when he communicates his name to a stranger, and loses a friend when he withholds it from him. The elders of our country and creed—Ah! what country on earth has not its elders and eminent men of wisdom?—have been very particular on this point. They say—at least one of them, to be sure, I forget his name at present—Ah, this is bad! Let me see—Was he Mylo Ding or Kalam Tuppan? To be sure it was the former! Oh, no, it was the latter, as certainly as I am alive! Ah, what memories we have at times! It was neither—it was Tuppan Dimmy! How we confound Dimmy with Ding!——"

At this stage of its trot, or something like it, the tongue of the Voluble Tartar would be arrested by the stranger, who, after a repetition of the query, perhaps a dozen times, would get the right sort of reply, consisting of a word or two.

The Khan of these people had a son named Didibal, and he was reputed the most voluble of his voluble race.

The two princes were rival suitors for the hand of Danima.

Jubal said to her one evening, "I love you," and this was all that he ever said to her in the course of his courtship concerning his attachment to her.

Didibal went to her the next evening, as on many another evening before, and said, "Illustrious princess—or shall I call you my dear Danima?—there is no reason why hearts that have been so closely drawn to each other should stand on insipid formalities, so, dear Danima, allow me for one moment to disclose my inmost feelings and impressions concerning your charms and accomplishments—aye, for one

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moment only—for every moment of your happy and innocent life is a delightful dream, and the greatest sin that man could commit would be to mar it with importunate plaints, howsoever sincere the heart from which they proceed; so allow me to tell you that the moon is ashamed of his light when he sees the light of your countenance. The gazelles hide their heads in the wilderness when they see your eyes. Love is the noblest of feelings that exalt our nature. The heart of Danima is the noblest edifice in which it can abide. Ah, our hearts are indeed edifices!—let none doubt it for one moment; and let me repeat with all the energy and emphasis at my command—here, by the way, let me observe that I mean no self-adulation; for every man must possess some amount of energy and emphasis, even as every muscle has some tension, and everybody, however insignificant, some heat in it—so let me repeat, with all the energy and emphasis at my command, that love is the goddess that dwells in the edifices of our hearts. 'Now, what says my Didibal?' is the yearning query of your heart, oh, Danima! Yes—'What says Didibal?'—there is much in the query. To do justice to it, as to many other things on earth—for here, by the way, it may be pointed out that we seldom do full justice to things when we speak of them—it must be urged that there is a whole world squeezed into it. Ay, it is a mustard-seed into which all the mountains of Tartary have been compressed. Now to the query again: it is possible to speak without a tongue, or write without a pen, if it is possible to give a suitable reply to the query. For, the fact of the matter is, Didibal knows not what to say, as his heart has been taken away. This confession, so very enigmatical, if not paradoxical, in its character, which I make in the present congested state of my feelings, may appear at the first blush a remonstrance. If it should be counted a remonstrance, it is, indeed, a purblind remonstrance. Now

to the query again: as his heart has been taken away, how is it to be answered—or rather, by whom? Ah, that proves to be the next great query! Query begetting query, impregnated by curiosity, as money begets money, impregnated by interest!——"

In this manner Didibal made a long speech, of which what has been cited is but a portion of the preface, so full of painful platitudes and tiresome truisms that the friends of Jubal, his rival, called it "a great pudding of sand, with pebbles for plums and chalk for sugar!"

The Princess Danima said that she would consider the claim of each to her love and esteem, and soon decide between them. Didibal said he would win. Jubal shook his head negatively. The negative nod of his rival incensed Didibal to such a degree that he proposed an appeal to arms on the fourth day thence, the interval being devoted to the requisite preparations for the battle.

Jubal assembled his troops, and his friends gave out that he would make three great speeches to his army at the rate of one each day. The army and the people were in eager expectation to hear their prince speak.

The first day Jubal surveyed his troops for a long time with minute attention, and rising in his saddle addressed them as follows:—"Shoes torn!"

This was the first great speech. Instantly every soldier went to mend his shoes; for in those days every Mongol soldier was his own cobbler.

The second great speech after the review on the second day was: "Weapons rusty!"

Instantly every soldier went to polish his sword and spear.

The third great speech on the third day was:—"Forget defeat!" and every soldier banished from his mind the very idea of defeat, and stood resolved to fight for victory or death.

About the same time, Didibal made three great speeches on the three consecutive days, each speech taking up a forenoon, while the soldiers and the people took the whole of the afternoon in admiring and applauding it, and went to bed at nightfall quite weary with admiring and applauding, without attending to their arms and equipments.

"JUBAL POINTED THE ENEMY TO HIS MEN" (*p.* 237).

The Mongol historian, who has narrated the history of these two princes—Jubal and Didibal—gives at length the speeches of the latter on the three days. But we may rest content with a few extracts.

On the first day, Didibal, speaking to his troops on the condition of their shoes, said that, before proceeding to speak to them on the subject, he found himself constrained to place before them a lucid and comprehensive definition of the article, and so defined a shoe as follows :—"That pedestrial panoply of neat leather and nails which, under such varied names as boots, shoes, sandals, and slippers, has

been the perennial comfort of man and woman from time immemorial!"

The next day, Didibal spoke of rusty weapons in these terms:—"What dross is in a mine of shining metals, what jades are in a herd of high-mettled horses, what drones are in a hive of active bees, are rusty weapons in an armoury of brilliant arms and accoutrements!"

On the third day, speaking of defeat, Didibal said, "Neither gods nor men should court defeat. But when it cometh in spite of them, they should strive to hold their own in spite of it. Such a spirit actuated the ancestors of our glorious race, and such shall be our guide and impetus, come what would!"

On the fourth day the armies met. Didibal said to his troops, "Heroes, highly disciplined warriors, redoubtable revellers on the field of carnage—Victory or Death!—that shall be our motto, if motto we need, as we march against the enemy. Now let the fire of courage that glows in the furnace of your hearts heat your swords and spears red-hot, and thrust them with all-consuming energy into the hearts of your foes. The annals of glory—ah, what memories that magic word calls forth!—especially of our great ancestors—those valiant sons of fame that fought and won, on fields of gore, in times of yore!——"

In this style Didibal was proceeding with his high-spirited harangue to his troops, when Jubal pointed the enemy to his men, and said, "Turn not!"

They turned not, but advanced so steadily, and in such compact order, that Didibal's men threw down their weapons on the field, and fled so precipitately, that, as their enemies remarked, "their heels touched their helmets!"

The Princess Danima was apprised of the result of the battle, and gave her hand to the man of brevity, who

was the victor, saying, "A word of his is worth a volume of the other!"

These incidents in the lives of the rival Princes gave rise to a saying in the three Khanates to this effect:— "If you would win like Jubal, never woo like Didibal;" while the Tartars in that part of the world long spoke of such things as "Jubalic brevity" and "Didibalic volubility."

Didibal never forgave his rival Jubal, but spent the remainder of his life in holding up his character in the blackest colours to his own people, who liked him more and more in proportion to the increase of his ill-will and volubility against his happy rival; while the latter simply replied with a negative nod whenever his friends gave him an account of the doings of Didibal, as much as if he meant to say, "Words are not actions—so let him speak as long as he has breath to do so!"

The Prince remarked, "Jubal was, indeed, a man of few words. Perhaps his intelligent friends often explained to people his affirmative and negative nods, when they were the only replies he made."

The Prince would then have rested after the fatigues of thought which had produced so valuable a suggestion, but when another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, one may not possess even the faculty of speech, like the Braying Mandarin, yet, if he should have intelligent people around him, he may save an empire from ruin!"

The Prince, opening his eyes widely, exclaimed, "Good Mandarin, you spoke of the Braying Mandarin, did you not? Who was he? Surely this is the first time we hear of him! And it is, indeed, a curious name he bears!"

The Mandarin related the story as follows, after a few prefatory remarks:—

The Braying Mandarin.

In ancient times, when the Tartars made constant incursions into the Empire of China, there was an Emperor who spent the revenues of the country in dissipation, and turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of his ministers. Among these, the oldest, who was the Prime Minister, was a very wise and patriotic statesman.

One day, as his Majesty was proceeding to that part of his palace where some of his dissolute courtiers were awaiting his arrival, a courier came up, and said, "Sire, the Tartar Khan, with a hundred thousand horsemen, is on his way to the capital of the Celestial Empire."

Instantly the Emperor ordered the Prime Minister to assemble the troops.

But the troops said, "We have not received our pay for the past three years. Unless we are paid all the arrears at once, we will not move a step."

So the Emperor assembled the representatives of the people, and solicited their aid.

They said, "All the taxes for the year have been paid down. Your Majesty has no proper right to demand more."

But as his Majesty pressed them to contribute they went home, and returned at the head of rebellious bands more formidably arrayed than the army itself.

Just then a courier arrived from the Tartar Khan with this message :—

"The army of the Celestial Empire holds back. The people have risen in revolt. The Exchequer is empty. These facts we have ascertained through our spies. We have a hundred thousand horses. We are determined to win. Who will repel our attack?"

The patriotic Prime Minister was so provoked by this message from the enemy, that he instantly exclaimed, in a defiant mood, "An ass will!" and despatched the laconic reply to the Tartar Khan.

The Emperor and the Prime Minister again laid before the people the very serious condition of affairs, and besought them to contribute, promising that for three years following all taxes would be remitted.

But they were inexorable.

Thereupon the Prime Minister addressed the Emperor as follows:— "Sire, there is an old proverb that the public have a hundred eyes and a thousand ears; but, certainly, the public of the Celestial Empire must see with strange eyes, and hear with strange ears, when they would not realise the danger that threatens them, and the destruction that knocks at their very door. But there is a way of making them pay."

Here the Prime Minister paused.

The Prime Minister continued, "If your Majesty will solemnly promise to return to the righteous ways of the great Imperial sages, your ancestors, I shall pay down the arrears due to the army in the course of an afternoon, send it in the evening against the Tartars, and show it to your Majesty as it returns, with flying colours, the next morning, after routing the barbarians."

The Emperor took a solemn oath that he would give up his dissolute habits altogether, saying, "Henceforth, I am a different man."

Instantly the Prime Minister purchased from a poor washerman, who lived at some distance from the palace, an old jaded donkey, got it painted in brilliant colours, with the emblem of the Imperial Dragon on its forehead, and issued a proclamation, in the name of his Majesty, to this effect:—

"In the Imperial Archives deposited in our palace, for our special guidance from time to time, it is recorded that when three great evils occur together—viz., when foreign foes threaten the Empire, the army holds back, and the people revolt—a miracle would save the throne. We sent up our supplications to heaven, and have been told that a donkey, with the Imperial Dragon—heaven bless the emblem for ever!—on its forehead, would come out of the Peiho at noon, on the eighth day hence, just as the Tartars come within a day's march of the capital, that in the evening our mighty army would march out, and that the next morning it would return to the city with flying colours, after routing the barbarians."

This proclamation was accompanied by a request to people of all denominations, and trades, and professions, to join the Prime Minister in giving publicity to the fact.

The first to respond to this call was a Jewish Rabbi, who preached a sermon in his synagogue, adducing what he called auxiliary testimony to the existence of such wonderful asses, and concluded with writing a book on the subject. There was such a demand for the book, that the one hundred and thirty-seventh edition had to be brought out before the donkey had actually appeared.

The next people to move in the matter were the Imperial Scribes. These were a class of men employed by the State in those days to give publicity to its edicts by commenting freely on their merits.

So the Scribes were divided into two classes: those who spoke in favour of these edicts, and those who opposed them. These two factions were ever at war.

According to the historian who has recorded the story of the Braying Mandarin, some of the Scribes had quills with one hundred horse power; some with two hundred horse power; some with three hundred horse power.

Some could turn out a column per minute; some two columns per minute; some three columns per minute, on any most abstruse subject, on any most out-of-the-way subject, and on all subjects existent, or non-existent, from a horseshoe to a flying elephant's nest.

When the scribbling afflatus was on them, some considered themselves High Priests, some Prime Ministers, some autocrats with unbounded authority.

When their pugnacious propensities were roused by the growls of militant contemporaries, especially of the other faction, some fought like lions, calling their quills claws, some like policemen, calling their quills bâtons, and some like scorpions, calling their quills stings.

When the Prime Minister had issued the proclamation, he sent a secret note to the two factions, that they should unite in this instance in recommending the project to the people.

So the Imperial Scribes laid their animosities aside, and bringing all their energies to bear upon the subject, wrote at length, exhorting the people to join the Emperor and the Prime Minister in giving a fitting reception to the expected hero, every one of them concluding with these words :—

"As we had already predicted, the Emperor has been driven to the necessity of invoking the aid of Heaven. We need hardly point out to the public of the Celestial Empire that our prediction in this instance, as in many another instance before, has been verified by the incontrovertible logic of facts."

Thirdly, the tradesmen of the Imperial City contributed the facilities in their power for the accomplishment of the Prime Minister's project. Everywhere, with that shrewdness which characterises the tradesmen of the Celestial Empire, they sold donkey shoes, donkey trowsers, donkey spectacles, donkey meat, donkey fish, donkey eggs, donkey

bags, donkey belts, and innumerable other things of the kind.

In justice to these benevolent tradesmen, who were more bent upon making the public comfortable and happy than lining their own purses, the historian points out that the articles of attire were for wear while proceeding to see the donkey, and the articles of consumption for breakfast on the morning of the eventful day on which he was expected.

When ample publicity had been given to the proclamation by all these means, the people, that had taken up arms everywhere, threw them down and repaired to the banks of the Peiho, to witness the advent of the wonderful donkey.

This was a windfall to all who had lodgings to let along the river. They charged for sleeping rooms, sitting rooms, standing rooms, smoking rooms, coughing rooms, and sneezing rooms, and various other kinds of rooms by the inch, and made enormous fortunes, some of them expressing regret that they could not charge for the air men consumed.

The historian here points out, that the people who took up lodgings along the river paid for their lodgings alone twenty times as much as they would have paid if they had complied with the request of the Emperor to contribute towards the emergency.

On the eighth day the people thronged to the banks of the Peiho in such numbers that there was hardly room on the ground to plant a needle. On all sides petty traders vended their wares. The street-boys, who form a tribe by themselves in every great city of the Celestial Empire, made themselves conspicuous everywhere with huge placards, on which were visible such stirring words as—"The Advent of the Wonderful Donkey!"—"Our Illustrious Four-footed

Visitor from the Peiho!"—"The Most Sensational Event of the Century!" which the boys also shouted forth in a most hideous fashion to attract the attention of the public.

The air resounded on all sides with the loud harangues of prophets and philosophers, who assured their audiences that the advent of the hero of the day had been revealed long before, and dwelt with special emphasis on his remarkable virtues, summoning to their aid all the enthusiasm and rhetoric at their command, and citing at the same time a great many texts from the huge volumes in the Imperial library, in corroboration of their assertions, which the people could not well hear in the midst of the deafening din of gongs and cymbals which resounded on all sides.

At noon exactly there was a blast of trumpets, and an announcement to the effect that the donkey had just risen from the Peiho, and arrived at a grand pavilion erected for his reception.

Everybody was eager to get into the pavilion, and pressed forward towards its entrance.

Just then the Prime Minister, who had been actively superintending the operations in holiday costume, stepped forth, and addressed the surging masses as follows:—

"I am but a humble servant of the Emperor and of the Celestials, who are his subjects. So let me lay the actual state of affairs before my worthy masters. There is not enough of space in the pavilion to contain so many at one and the same time. How shall we get over the difficulty?"

The people with one voice replied, "If so, fix your fee, and let all those who can afford to pay it get in and see."

The Prime Minister pretended to yield implicit obedience to the public will, and fixed the fee. As everybody was

eager to see the donkey, everybody paid the fee. Such numbers came and paid their fees that in the course of the afternoon the Imperial treasury had more money in it than it ever before had from all the taxes of a decade put together.

The officers and the army had all the arrears at once, with a promise of twice as much if they returned victorious. So they marched against the Tartars that evening, and returned the next morning with flying colours, after routing the barbarians.

As the troops entered the city triumphantly, the Prime Minister pointed them out to his Majesty from the window of the Imperial chamber, saying, "Sire, the ass has filled the Imperial coffers, routed the one hundred thousand horses of the barbarians, and saved the throne!" It also paid the troops the promised reward.

His Majesty rejoiced to see all that had happened. So he issued another proclamation to the effect that none in the Celestial Empire should refer to the animal under the name that naturally belonged to it, but call it the Beatified Mandarin. But the people got into the habit of calling it the Braying Mandarin, as the name came to their lips more easily and naturally than the title in the Imperial proclamation.

Of course, all the people of the Celestial Empire, which is the most populous empire in the world, could not see the Braying Mandarin at one and the same time. So they came day after day from the remotest provinces of it, impelled by curiosity to see the wonderful animal that had saved the country from perdition. The Prime Minister therefore continued to levy the fees as ever, and they became an enormous source of revenue to the Empire. In fact, quite another exchequer had to be built to put the fees in, and quite another office created to look after its affairs.

There is a proverb in the Celestial Empire which says, "From one effort of the wise a thousand benefits arise." Accordingly, a great many callings and trades arose from the fact of so many people coming to see the Braying Mandarin; one of the most noteworthy of these trades was the following.

The dealers in donkeys in the Celestial Empire, some time after the advent of the wonderful animal, had the sagacity to trace out a great many donkeys that belonged to the same breed as the Braying Mandarin, and brought them to the Imperial city.

So many rushed to purchase the animals that prices ran high, profits became incredibly great, and companies sprang up on all sides with the rapidity of the magic gourd, for the propagation of the illustrious breed for which such a demand had arisen among a highly intelligent and appreciative public. Everybody invested his spare cash in the speculation—so much so, that for a long time the capitalists of the Celestial Empire maintained—and with good reason, of course—that the safest and most advantageous investment was in the stocks of the Braying Mandarin.

The advent of the Braying Mandarin gave rise to a great many amusing anecdotes.

This was one of them.

The poor washerman who had parted with the animal for a price, whose only good fortune appeared to have consisted in his having been the original possessor of the animal, and who had not the remotest idea of its present prosperity and pre-eminence—for the Prime Minister carefully concealed its antecedents—saved a small sum out of his weekly earnings, and at the end of a year had enough to cover the fee to get into the pavilion.

When he saw the Braying Mandarin, he exclaimed, "Ah, this is very much like my old donkey—Padalang!—

with this difference, that it has the Imperial dragon painted on its forehead!"

But the guards in attendance took him before a Mandarin, who was a magistrate, and he sent him to prison for a year and six months, for his irreverent conduct towards the Beatified Mandarin.

The poor washerman, who had not heard this name which the Mandarin mentioned in his sentence, said he knew nothing of such an animal, but that he had been to see the Braying Mandarin.

The Mandarin gave him another six months, observing, "In a court of justice, you must use only such names as are recognised in the Imperial edicts, which form the law of the country. You have, therefore, been guilty of another crime in calling the Beatified Mandarin by a name which, in the opinion of this court, is but an echo of the Imperial will, is not only vulgar, but of questionable propriety."

The Prince remarked: "It was, indeed, very wrong of the people to have so persistently refused to help the Emperor when the country was threatened by such a dangerous foe. They might have taken advantage of the opportunity to impose such restrictions on his Majesty's private conduct as would conduce to his own benefit and the benefit of his subjects at large. But for the stratagem adopted by his Prime Minister, disastrous results must have ensued."

Here another Mandarin got up, and said: "Sire, the people of the Celestial Empire on this occasion were as persistently blind to their own interests as the idle man who was set right by the elf."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Idle Man and the Elf.

In one of the western provinces of the Celestial Empire there was a man named Kairath Vangi, who spent his time in chatting with his neighbours, and concerned himself in everybody's business but his own. For instance, if a neighbour's waggon stuck in the mud at some distance from the village, Kairath Vangi was the first to go there and put his shoulder to the wheel.

But he had a cart whose wheels he seldom greased, and

"KAIRATH VANGI WAS THE FIRST TO RUN AFTER IT"

which he never drove, saying, "By the time I set my cart in driving order, the cart of my life may reach its destination—who knows it will not?"

If the thatch of a neighbour's cottage flew away in the wind, Kairath Vangi was the first to run after it, and bring it back to its place on the roof.

But he lived in a hut, one-half of which had become a heap of ruins, and which he never attempted to repair, saying, "Life is a bubble. It may burst before the other

half of the hut, which is in good order, and which is quite enough for my purposes, drops down, and I may be no more; so I need not trouble myself about setting my hut in order."

If the straw in the trough of a neighbour's cow ran short, Kairath Vangi was the first to observe it, and supply the deficiency. But he had a cow which grew leaner and leaner every day, because he gave it nothing to eat—turning it adrift on the common, where there was hardly a blade of grass, saying, "Well, every animal has its allotted period of life. The cow will certainly live for the period for which it has been destined to live. Neither good feeding will keep it longer, nor bad feeding curtail its life."

His own means of subsistence were almost gone. Yet he said to himself, "How do the birds of the air live? How do the beasts in the wilderness live? Certainly, he that has planted the tree must see to its watering!"

In spite of all his philosophy—and Kairath Vangi fancied he had a great deal of it—he summed up his happiness thus, "As to work, why, that I must shirk. To get up at noon, I consider too soon. What if I am no bread-winner, yet I shall enjoy my dinner."

But as it was not easy to get a good dinner in the Celestial Empire without being an active bread-winner, or dependent upon somebody else who was, or had been, a bread-winner by toil or plunder—and we may be sure it is the same all the world over—Kairath Vangi was obliged to curry favour with his neighbours, and be ever on the look-out for an opportunity to get in, when they kept a good table, and were in a mood to admit him.

Again, Kairath Vangi had a secret desire to marry, and some day earn the coveted title of a father. But every woman whom he thought of turned away from him, saying he was "Fair as an ape, and provident as a butterfly!"

But Kairath Vangi was not disconcerted in the least. He persisted in making the acquaintance of the young ladies in the neighbourhood, saying, "If a man should make the acquaintance of a hundred young ladies, some one of them ought to take a fancy to him some day, and return his love."

An Elf, named Mima, had long been watching his conduct, and said to herself, "This man is an inveterate idler and a scandal to his race. I must knock his idleness out of him, and his aggravating philosophy, to boot."

So she said to him, "Good Kairath Vangi, I have been long in love with you. Will you marry me? You need not work at all; I shall maintain you with the proceeds of my labour."

Kairath Vangi said to himself, "Ah! the philosophy in my saying about making the acquaintance of a hundred young ladies has proved itself! I get a wife, and ease for life! I need not trouble myself about work any more!"

So he married the Elf.

Now, this Elf, Mima, had the wonderful power of providing babies at the rate of one baby a day. So the day after their marriage a baby appeared.

Mima said, "Dear husband, I am so sorry to send you to work. The sun may burn your fine face and the wind may give you a cold. But it is inevitable, that we might maintain ourselves and this baby. So soon as I am able, I will go to work, and let you live as happily as ever."

Kairath Vangi flattered himself with the hope that he had to work only for a day or two, and then be relieved by his wife, when he might return to his old ways. But the next day another baby was born. So they had to feed and clothe two babies. Kairath Vangi again flattered himself with the hope that his wife would soon relieve him. So he went to work again. The next day

"ALL THE . . . . BABIES CRIED AT TIMES IN A CHORUS" (*p.* 253).

another baby was born, and he had to play the same part again.

Thus in the course of a year the hut, or the part of it that was habitable, was filled with babies. Some got into the kitchen, some got into the pantry, some crept over the walls, some stuck to the ceiling, some tumbled on the roof, some rolled in the garden. There was hardly an inch of space where there was not a baby, and hardly a baby that had not an inch of space for itself, somewhere in the hut or the garden. This state of affairs extremely alarmed Kairath Vangi.

Again, the quantity of food they consumed was enormous. As Kairath Vangi remarked, with a shudder, they required a lake of milk and a mountain of biscuit every day! In addition to his being thus profoundly impressed with the magnitude of the requirements of baby hunger, he had a good specimen of what some people call baby music, for all the three hundred and odd babies cried at times in a chorus; at times two babies would cry, as if they sang a duet.

At times, only one baby would strike up a low note, and then there would be the chorus again in full swing, thus exhibiting in the course of every hour all that rich variety of voice—high and low, sharp and flat, grave and gay—with which babies are specially gifted.

During the night, if ever there was a moment of silence, and he composed himself to sleep, Mima would startle him with the cry, "Dear husband, some baby has rolled on to the ground!"

Instantly Kairath Vangi would start to his feet in quest of the truant, lamenting the hour he was born. When he had put it to bed, another would play the same trick; then a third, then a fourth, and so on.

This proved to him with a vengeance the false philosophy

in his favourite saying, "Rising at noon was rising too soon."

Instead of rising at such a late hour, he rose before his neighbours, and went to bed after them, seldom enjoying the luxury of a quiet wink of sleep.

If ever he had some leisure in the week, and showed an inclination to go to gossip with his neighbours, Mima brought him the babies one by one, saying, "Ah, dear husband, the poor dear little ones seldom get a kiss from you!"

So Kairath Vangi would fall to kissing the babies. Of course, kissing every one such a hive of babies will take time; so, before he had kissed half the family, his leisure hour was gone.

Thus, without sleep, without leisure, without any chance of gossiping with his neighbours, poor Kairath Vangi was constrained to work. He worked hard and well. Soon he converted his cart into a number of waggons, with well-harnessed teams, his hut into a large and commodious house, his cow into a herd, and showed signs of remarkable progress in every other respect.

His neighbours fancied he had acquired some secret of making wealth which they had not, and asked him what it was.

He replied, "Ah! if you had a baby every day, you would soon find out where the secret lay!"

The Prince observed, with a smile: "Poor Kairath Vangi eventually gave expression to sentiments that had not originally formed a part of his philosophy."

Then another Mandarin stood up and said, "Sire, like the two great philosophers of the Imperial city, Kairath Vangi had to give such sentiments a niche in the temple of his wisdom because experience forced them upon his attention."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story of the Two Philosophers and he proceeded with it as follows :—

The Two Philosophers.

In the city of Pekin there were two philosophers, named Sī Melang Ho and Dī Telang Ho, who were generally known by the abbreviated forms of their names—Melang and Telang. They had read a great many books, discussed a great many problems, and contracted a great many habits, conspicuous among which were demure silence and deep meditation ; the philosophers observing, " On the still waters of the Lake of Silence repose the swans, Sanctity and Wisdom."

"TWO PHILOSOPHERS."

Each of these philosophers had conceived an utter contempt for human kind and its enjoyments, saying, " This world is a dream ; and all the men and women in it are phantoms." This contempt, says the biographer of these great men, was increased tenfold after a certain incident which happened to them at a boarding-house in the Imperial city.

One evening the landlady asked them what philosophy was. They said it was not easy to explain the term, but that, in brief, it involved superior knowledge and wisdom about some of the most important problems of life. The

landlady asked if they had a good recipe in the philosophy for making soup of the nest of the eider duck, which is a well-known delicacy throughout the Celestial Empire, and which therefore everybody, including the two philosophers, prized highly.

But the philosophers indignantly replied, "Philosophy is not cookery."

"I thought it was," said the landlady.

"What made you think so?" cried the philosophers, whose feelings were outraged by this reply.

The irrepressible landlady replied, "Ah! you said it had something to do with the most important problems of life! These are three, as you and everybody else must admit—Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner. To devise what we can have for each is to solve the problem!"

This reply confirmed the opinion of the philosophers that human kind is more solicitous about the gratification of its animal appetites and passions than the attainment of true wisdom. Each philosopher, at that period, in the Celestial Empire belonged to what he called his school. Now, a philosopher's school, in those days, was not like a boys' school, with sceptred pedagogues wielding unbounded sway over their juvenile subjects. It was a guild, the members of which entertained a certain opinion.

For instance, if a boy said, rightly or wrongly, that oysters were cheap in autumn, and another said "No," and the two went to the philosophers, they would say the first boy belonged to the school of the Autumnal Oysterians, and the second to the school of the Non-Autumnal Oysterians.

As these philosophers constantly endeavoured to impress on the minds of their pupils, each school might consist of one person, or two persons, or twenty persons, or two hundred thousand persons. As an example of the first,

they often cited a certain man in Pekin, who said that all the old women in that city, when they died, instead of receiving the burial due to people in the Celestial Empire, were converted into meat for the cats, dogs, and other inferior animals in it; for they assumed that he could be the only man who entertained such an inhuman and irreverent opinion.

As an example of the second, they cited a certain married couple in Pekin, who maintained that they were the most loving and happy pair in that city.

These philosophers had also what they called their Doctrines and Laws. Now, it is not very easy to explain the meanings of these terms, as they were understood by the philosophers; but we may illustrate them. Suppose a husband quarrelled with his wife, or a wife with her husband, Melang and Telang said they quarrelled because there had been an aberration from the Law of the Equilibrium of the Affections.

If the question arose whether the husband and wife would make it up between themselves, Melang would say, "Well, brother Telang, you know I believe in the doctrine of the Ultimate Separation of the Sexes; so I maintain that they will not unite."

Telang would say, "Well, brother Melang, you know I believe in the doctrine of the Ultimate Adhesion of the Sexes; so I maintain that they will unite."

Again, if two dogs came together in the streets, or two cats met each other on the roof, or the cock crowed in the morning, or a horse reared its hind legs and kicked the groom, or some unprincipled man in authority, in a fit of rage, ordered the bastinado to the man of wealth who would not give him presents, or a lover bent the knee before his mistress, calling her his goddess, and appreciating her beauty and accomplishments in sundry other ways, or a

glutton died of surfeit, the philosophers ascribed them all to certain laws, which they enunciated respectively under such learned titles as Canine Cognitions, Feline Frailties, Matutinal Intonations, Equestrian Energy, Emotional Ebullitions, Æsthetic Genuflections, and Gastronomical Conclusions.

They had a great many other phrases, of a miscellaneous character, in their philosophical vocabulary. If a boy cried for cake, and his mother gave it to him, they called it the Logic of Tears. A wise painter they called a Philosopher of the Pencil. A wise barber, in their solicitude to subordinate every art and profession to philosophy, they called a Philosopher of the Razor and the Strop.

In this manner these philosophers had a great many fine phrases, in which they embalmed some of the most ordinary ideas and incidents of life, and constantly cited them in the course of their dissertations.

One day they were walking through the streets of the Imperial city, studying life, and stocking their overburdened memories with fresh facts and phrases, and drawing moral and philosophical conclusions at every step. In a certain street they found a Manchur merchant with a shuttlecock in his hand, shouting, "I give this to the cleverest fighter among the boys here."

Instantly a number of little boys gathered round the merchant.

Melang said, "Ah, good brother Telang, here is a scene for study! How the boys have verified the law of Juvenile Concentration!"

Then the boys began to fight each other furiously for the prize.

Telang said it was in strict conformity with the law of Puerile Pugnacity.

Then one of the boys knocked the others down, one

after another, and got the shuttlecock, while the rest lay rolling helplessly on the ground.

Melang said, "Ah! this is in strict conformity with the great law of the Survival of the Strongest and the Fittest.

Then they marched a step further to study the fallen boys more closely, when a little fellow, who had been rolling on the ground, apparently in a piteous condition, started up, and at a bound wrenched the prize from the victor, and laid him hopelessly grovelling on the ground.

Melang paused for a moment, and said, "Ah! what is this strange law, brother Telang?"

Telang said, "Well, brother, it is a law which we have not in our books. But none the less is it a law; so we ought to give it a name this moment. Well, we may call it the Great Law of the Revival of the Weakest."

The Prince remarked, with a smile, "The philosophers had, no doubt, a good opportunity to apply their principles, and deduce conclusions from them, in the scene of the shuttlecock, and the little boys struggling for it. But what a misfortune it was to the boy who fancied he had conquered all his companions to be so suddenly hurled down by the little fellow!"

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, it must have been as great a surprise to the boy who was at first victorious to be so suddenly pulled down from his triumphant position as it was to Ting Chang to meet with ignominy and defeat from the Bamboo Devil, after having subdued every fiend in and around the country where he lived."

The Prince requested him to relate the story, and the Mandarin proceeded with it as follows:—

The Bamboo Fiend.

Near the great wall of the Celestial Empire there lived in a village a man named Ting Chang, who called himself a great magician. He said he was very old, and knew a great many fiends who were afraid of him.

For instance, he spoke of the Smoke Fiend, the Fire Fiend, the Wind Fiend, the Wood Fiend, and the Wall Fiend in terms of extreme familiarity.

When he spoke of the last, he invariably pointed to the great wall, and said, "Do you know how that wall came into existence?"

The people would say "No."

He would say, "Well, it was in this manner. There was a great Emperor of the Celestials, who had an only daughter. She was very fair. A fiend one day fell in love with her, and told the Emperor, her father, that he wished to have her for his bride.

"The Emperor, wishing to know the qualifications of the fiend who desired to become his son-in-law, asked him in what he excelled.

"He said he was a great builder.

"'If so,' said the Emperor, 'build me a great wall round the Celestial Empire.'

"Instantly he built the wall, and asked for his daughter.

"I was then close by.

"The Emperor said, 'Ah! Ting Chang, what shall we do?'

"I said, 'Your Majesty has only to mention my name to the fiend, and leave the rest to me.'

"So the Emperor mentioned my name.

"The fiend exclaimed, 'Ah! I can throw a great wall round the Celestial Empire in no time. But neither I, nor

all the fiends that form my band, can ever hope to throw an obstacle in the way of the Magician, Ting Chang, when he has decided to do a thing.'

"So saying, the fiend came to me, and said, 'Master Ting Chang, what is thy bidding?'

"'Get into the wall, and never leave it till I bid you do so,' said I.

"'I am thy obedient slave, Master Ting Chang,' said he, and got into the wall, where he is confined to this day. At

"SENDING HIM OUT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD."

times he sighs bitterly, and as often as he does so a crevice appears in the wall, which those who are not acquainted with the real state of affairs foolishly ascribe to the action of Time and the Elements."

The credulous people of the place believed the story of Ting Chang, and paid him the homage due to a man of superior learning and wisdom.

Now, really this Ting Chang was a dreadful impostor. No fiend had ever become his slave. If a cat took it into his head to regale people with his caterwauling, and disturb their slumbers of a night, Ting Chang called him a Cat Fiend, and had his fee for sending him out of the neighbourhood.

If a drought or famine came over the province, he drove out the Drought Fiend or the Famine Fiend, and had a heavy fee in every case. In this manner he made plenty of money by his pretensions.

The name of Ting Chang spread over the whole province as that of a potent magician, who had unbounded sway over the spirit and the fiend world.

The Mandarin of the province had an only daughter, who had been ill for some time. So he sent for Ting Chang, and laid her case before him.

Ting Chang said, "Unless I see the lady, I cannot give an opinion about her malady."

With great difficulty they made such arrangements as would enable Ting Chang to see her.

When he saw her, he exclaimed, "Ah, what a fair young lady! I must have her for my wife!"

With this resolution, Ting Chang told the Mandarin, in a whisper, that his daughter had what magicians called the Love Fiend.

The Mandarin requested him to exorcise the demon without delay.

Ting Chang put on a very serious countenance, and said, "But it is no easy task. I cannot undertake to exorcise the fiend unless your Excellency issues strict orders that any and every direction I give should be carried out at once."

The Mandarin, who was solicitous about the health of his child, said, "Your directions shall be strictly followed."

The Mandarin having presently observed that the incantations to drive out the Love Fiend really meant the entrapping of his daughter into marriage with Ting Chang, ordered his men to bind Ting Chang hand and foot, and give him the bastinado.

Accordingly, they bound him hand and foot, and laid

him on the ground, while one of them brought the great bamboo stick with which he was to be flogged.

Ting Chang asked what that was.

The Mandarin replied, "Ah, Ting Chang, it is the Bamboo Fiend!"

Ting Chang found his master in the Bamboo Fiend, which obtained also such mastery over all the other fiends, that Ting Chang never named them any more.

Poor Ting Chang could give no reply, he was so faint and thirsty. He went home, and never thought of the Love Fiend or any other fiend thereafter."

Along the great wall of the Celestial Empire the people have to this day a saying that "the best cure for the Love Fiend is the Bamboo Devil."

The Prince observed, with a smile, "The Love Fiend is, indeed, the most mischievous fiend. Everything seemed to go on very well with Ting Chang till he roused him from his slumbers."

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, everything may go on very well with people till they come in contact with the Love Fiend, as in the case of the Five Princes, Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, Sa, who lived on terms of unwonted harmony and friendship till they met him in the enchanting form of a Fairy."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Five Princes that Loved a Fairy.

In a certain country not far from the Celestial Empire, there were five princes, who were such great friends that they called themselves Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, Sa, meaning thereby

that just as the vowel in all the words was the same, they had the same spirit, though their bodies differed like the consonants.

They ate out of one dish, they slept in one bed, and sat, rose, walked, and talked like one man. So if one sneezed, all the rest sneezed; if one coughed, all the rest coughed; if one got a head-ache, all the rest got it; if one sprained his foot, all the rest did the same; if one said he liked an egg, all the rest liked it; if one said he hated jams and cheese-cakes, all the rest hated them.

"THEY . . . WALKED AND TALKED LIKE ONE MAN."

If one said he felt fidgety in bed, all the rest felt the same; if one snored, all the rest did. When they were at school, the pedagogue had to give them all lessons at one and the same time, and hear them recited at one and the same time. If one had a bad memory over a lesson, all the rest had it; and if one was entitled to a flogging, all the rest went in for it at the same time.

But as the pedagogue had but one flogging hand: the right—for pedagogues seldom flog with the left, as every

school-going boy knows—he could not flog the princes as they required. So he never flogged them.

There is a curious anecdote in connection with the scholastic career of these princes. One day a man, who said he was a logician and philosopher, met them at school, and said, in sport, he would give some one of them that would take it a nice plaything called a Dilemma.

They replied they wanted five—one for each.

But he said, "What do you want five for? You may count yourself extremely fortunate if you can manage with one."

The princes asked the logician for the thing.

He said, "You will see it some day. It is a very nice thing to look at."

Of course the whole discourse on the subject was a hoax, as the logician knew very well. But the princes believed what he said, and were eagerly watching at every turn in their transactions for the very nice-looking thing, Dilemma.

These five princes, Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, Sa, often rode out into the country in quest of various amusements. If a fence was in the way, they jumped over it together. If one caught a hare, he would not say he caught it, but they—all the five—caught it. If one threw a stone at a frog in the pond, all the rest hit the same poor thing. If one gave a piece of copper to a poor country beggar, all the rest gave him a piece per head.

If, while passing through the woods, one whooped like a savage, all the rest whooped alike. If one screeched like an owl, all the rest imitated the sweet notes of the same amiable bird. If one climbed a tree, all the rest went up at the same time. If one jumped down from it, all the rest did the same.

Now, there was a mischievous fairy in that neighbour-

hood, who had long watched with intense interest the proceedings of the five friends, Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, Sa, and said to herself, "Ah! these are queer little men that stick to one another like this! But let me see how long they will live in such harmony."

So one day she appeared on the chin of one, in the form of down.

Instantly he went to a barber for a shave, and all the rest went with him, and subjected themselves to the same process, though there was as much down on their chins as on a piece of polished marble.

The next day, while they were going to sing a familiar song in chorus, the fairy effaced it from the memories of Ka, Ma, Na, Sa; Ya recited the first line, and said he had also forgotten it.

The day after, the mischievous fairy smeared on the head of Ya the juice of some mysterious plant, and instantly he raved like a madman, and snatched a knife to cut his own throat, and Ka, Ma, Na, Sa snatched a knife each, of equal width, length, and sharpness, and raving by the side of their comrade in the same style, gave earnest indications of the same suicidal propensities.

When she saw this, the fairy was in despair. She said to herself, "Well, these princes are indeed proof against all my arts. Almost all the arrows in my quiver have been shot but one. Let me see if they can resist in unison that one also."

So the next day, when the princes went out into the country for a ride, she presented herself to their view in all the charms proverbially ascribed to her race, on a sunny bank, decked with eglantines, as though she was listening with rapt attention to the murmurs of a rill that flowed from a gently-sloping hill.

Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, Sa called out to her with one voice

"Good fairy, turn this side, and be for aye our happy bride!" and said to themselves, "Ah! she is indeed the nicest-looking that we have yet seen; so she is no doubt Dilemma, of whom the good logician spoke to us before."

The fairy exclaimed, "I see five princes before me ride; how can they have a single bride?"

The princes replied, "No, good Dilemma; though five, we love you all the same; we are but one, though five in name."

The fairy appeared to be satisfied, and solicited to be taken behind some one on the saddle, that she might ride home and be their bride.

Up to this point everything went on very well with the five friends. But here the question arose on whose saddle she was to sit.

Ya said, he would have her by his side. Ka said, he would take her on his own saddle. Ma said, the fairy was very delicate, and that he alone could take such care as would ensure her safety and comfort on horseback. Na and Sa each put forth some incontrovertible argument of his own to have the fairy by his side.

While they were thus engaged in discussing the point—this, by the way, being the very first instance in their lives when they so discussed a point—Ya, with the celerity of lightning, put the good fairy Dilemma on the saddle behind him, and rode off.

Ka exclaimed, that he was a freebooter!

Ma said, he was a marauder!

Na said, he was a wretch!

Sa said, he was an incorrigible villain!

So the four princes pursued him, and cut off his pigtail.

Just then the mischievous fairy Dilemma, by some magic of her own, appeared on the saddle behind Ka, and

he rode off with her, fancying for one moment that he was, after all, the victor.

The rest ran after him, shouting the same names as had been applied to Ya, and soon overtaking him, cut off his pigtail.

Then they saw her behind Ma, and inflicted the same summary punishment on him.

Then Na found her by his side, and sacrificed his pigtail to the fury of his comrades, till, after all, Sa successfully

"SA . . . RODE OFF WITH THE FAIRY."

rode off with the Fairy Dilemma, and shut himself with her in his palace.

The four princes, Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, are still knocking at his door, calling him all kinds of names, and challenging him to come out and close in deadly fight with any one, or all four of them, if he has a spark of gallantry in his heart. But people say that the only reply is an occasional chuckle, which the four princes hear when they put their ears to the key-hole, after repeating their defiant shouts and threats from time to time.

Further, it must be recorded that Sa, at times, puts his head out of his chamber window with a long pipe in his

mouth, and the Fairy Dilemma fondly leaning on his arm, and waves his hand at the four princes, Ya, Ka, Ma, Na, as if he meant to say, "There is no good in your tarrying here —be gone!"

Thereupon, the four princes jump and somersault in the air, endeavouring to get at him, when he and the fairy draw their heads in with perfect composure, and the same chuckle is heard again, while a voice in the air observes:— "When the fairies come in their way, friends have indeed a trying day!"

The Prince remarked, "It is indeed foolish of the four princes to linger at the door of Sa's palace when he has made the Fairy Dilemma his wife, and has been living with her for a long time already. Surely they do not mean to say that they can get her back to themselves!"

Here another Mandarin stood up, and said, "Sire, the four princes may get the fairy, perhaps, about the same time that the descendants of the architects who built for the Sultan of Tartary his capital city will get the philosopher's stone which hangs in a golden casket on a silver pole in a charming little island in the midst of a glassy lake by the great city."

The Prince requested the Mandarin to relate the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Story of the Sultan of Tartary who had the Philosopher's Stone in his Turban.

There was a Sultan of Tartary who wished to build a great city for his capital. He said to himself, "We have bricks, we have stone, we have wood, we have men. All

that is required is labour. Well, labour means wages to the workmen. There is no money in the exchequer to pay the men; yet the work must be done."

So he assembled his subjects, and said, "We want a hundred thousand efficient men to build the capital—will you help us?"

They said, "How will you pay for our work, O Sultan?"

The Sultan said, "There is no money in the exchequer, as you all know. When the capital shall have been built, each of you will have a hundred acres of land, a herd of fat cattle, as well as a house for himself in the city."

They said, "We will not leave our homes and families for such a precarious reward. If your Majesty should promise something more substantial, we will help you."

The Sultan mused within himself as follows:—"A house to live in, a herd of fat cattle, and a hundred acres of land are no inducement to work to these wanderers in the desert! So, when their reason would not respond to our call, we must appeal to their imagination."

The next day his Majesty assembled his subjects again, and said, "Well, we simply wished to test the extent of your ambition; for it was a high ambition that prompted us to build a great city for ourselves, while till now we were content to live in tents in the desert. It was indeed a pleasure to know that our subjects were equally ambitious, and demanded something more substantial. We have to make a revelation this day."

Here his Majesty paused for one moment, and reading in the faces of his subjects that their curiosity was roused to the highest pitch by this preface, proceeded with his speech as follows:—"We have got the philosopher's stone, of whose wonderful virtues you have all heard. We keep it concealed this moment in the folds of our turban. So soon as the city shall be finished, we will give each as much

gold as he can weigh in the largest pair of scales of his own making."

The subjects replied, "O Sultan! we shall have to work very hard at it. We will do our best to make the city as extensive, as beautiful, and as magnificent as it could possibly be. But this one condition must be strictly borne in mind by your Majesty—that to every one of us be given exactly the same quantity of gold."

The Sultan said, "Till now, you have had no occasion to impugn the justice of our motives and actions. In this instance also you may depend upon our dealing out the gold with the strictest impartiality—ay, without an atom of difference."

So the people set to work at the building of the city.

In the midst of an extensive oasis the Sultan marked out a plot in the form of a perfect circle, which he cut into two halves. One semicircle was converted into a deep lake, with an island in the middle. When it was full, the building of the city, over the other semicircle, began. The diameter of the circle between the site of the city and the lake was the great royal street.

In it, the Sultan's palaces and offices rose in one magnificent row, commanding a view of the lake. Behind were the innumerable squares and crescents, places and streets, roads and lanes. His Majesty superintended the work in person, encouraging the men in every possible way. At times his Majesty would pretend to have felt something going wrong in his turban, and fall to adjusting it with great caution.

When the men asked what it was, his Majesty would reply, "It is all the doing of that philosopher's stone that we have got in our turban. It wishes to get out as soon as possible. Of course, we have to keep it there, yet a while, with the plea that the work is not yet over—the only plea to

which it would listen—and that so soon as it is finished it will be asked to do its duty."

Here the men would pause for one moment in the midst of their work, and ask what its duty was.

The Sultan would reply, "As we have already informed you, it was acquired by a great philosopher, who lived a thousand years in the Thian Shan Mountains, for the special purpose of aiding Sultans who wish to build great cities. Many a city was built before by its aid. Every one of those cities was built in a hundred days, and on the next day after completion the men were paid. Now, you have already spent a hundred days in laying the foundations of the city, and the superstructure may take another hundred days, if not more. Hence the haste which the stone in our turban makes."

This was a hint to the men that they were slow in doing their work. It was also an inducement to work harder. So they worked very hard, in sanguine expectation of getting the promised gold.

When the city was finished, the Sultan, with all his family and court, entered it, and took up his residence in the royal street, where a palace was assigned to each minister and dignitary of the realm.

Then the Sultan addressed the one hundred thousand workmen as follows:—"In addition to the gold which we are to give you, we wish each of you to accept a house, a herd of fat cattle, and a hundred acres of land, as originally stipulated. Again, as it has been decided that you should all have exactly the same quantity of gold, without an iota of difference, and as we have already promised to give each as much gold as he could weigh in the largest pair of scales of his own making, we shall be very happy to see you with the scales as soon as practicable."

Here his Majesty perceived that the workmen received

this part of his speech with great gratification. So he continued: "The city being completed, the stone in the folds in our turban has grown more troublesome than ever. So we propose confining its turbulent energies in a casket of gold, and hanging it up on the top of a silver pole, to be planted in the middle of the island in the lake—of course, awaiting eagerly your arrival with the pairs of scales, which we earnestly hope you will lose no time in completing."

"THE CASKET WAS IN . . A CONSPICUOUS POSITION."

Each of the men accepted the house, the herd of fat cattle, and the hundred acres of land, which kept him and his family in perfect comfort, and went to make his pair of scales at leisure. The Sultan hung up the golden casket, which, he said, contained the philosopher's stone, on the top of a lofty silver pole planted on the island in the middle of the lake.

The casket was in such a conspicuous position as to be visible from the door of every house in the city. So almost every minute of the day each of the one hundred thousand

architects came out of his house, and snatched a look at it. Now, every time he looked at it he felt his cupidity increase a hundred-fold. So after making the largest pair of scales for the time being, he would again look at the golden casket on the lofty silver pole on the island in the midst of the glassy semicircular lake, and demolish the unlucky instrument, exclaiming, "Ah! this pair of scales is ridiculously small in comparison with the quantity it may have to weigh. So I ought to make it larger!"

In this manner, after working at it for a long time, the men put all their scales together to see that they were exactly of equal dimension. But as each was constructed in proportion to the greed and capacity of its owner, there was great diversity, if not disparity, among the instruments. So the men fell to adjusting and comparing their scales again and again.

The Sultan, finding the men still unready, issued a general edict that when they should be no more, the gold should be given to their posterity whenever they should present themselves with their scales in perfect order.

In course of time the workmen, one and all, died without adjusting their scales. But their posterity, being eager to obtain the prize which their fathers missed, are still actively striving to adjust their scales, while the philosopher's stone, which the great Sultan said he had locked up in the casket, still hangs from the top of the silver pole planted on the charming little island in the midst of the glassy semicircular lake.

Again, the progeny of the one hundred thousand workmen have in course of time multiplied enormously. Each among them, at the time of bequeathing his property to his children, adds a clause to his will in these terms:—"My children shall each have an equal share of all this property, as also of the gold from the casket of the Sultan—

peace be to his generous soul, and blessed be his glorious memory for aye !—should it fall to their share in their generation."

In this manner a great amount of imaginary wealth is being transferred from father to son throughout that great country over which that magnanimous Sultan ruled. When

"HE GENERALLY POINTS TO THE CASKET."

a young man has spent lavishly all the tangible property that he inherited from his father, he is yet proud, in that country, of possessing what he and a great many like him persistently denominate "Casket wealth."

Should unruly creditors overslip the bounds of forbearance and due time for the debts he owed them, he generally

points to the casket, saying, "Mind, I have all my wealth in it. I have very nearly finished the pair of scales, along with others concerned. When I shall have got my share of the gold, I shall be able to pay you, and a thousand snarling creditors like you, a thousand times over!"

The Prince remarked: "It is indeed a pleasure to note the intense gratitude with which the posterity of the one hundred thousand architects remembered the great Sultan. As grateful men are sure to thrive, and to be honoured all the world over, we may rest assured that the descendants of the subjects of the great Sultan are to this day prosperous and happy."

Here another Mandarin got up, and said, "Sire, the Tartars of the country over which the great Sultan ruled in course of time embraced the religion of Islam. Yet they cherish the memory of the monarch with such reverence and gratitude, that it has become quite an ordinary thing in that country to speak in terms of unbounded praise of that exalted virtue of our race.

"They have a proverb among them which says—The grateful man has starved the devils!—and which they illustrate with a story called The Banquet of the Fiends"

The Prince requested the Mandarin to tell the story, and he proceeded with it as follows:—

The Banquet of the Fiends.

Iblis, the Sultan of All-Fiend-Land, said to his courtiers, "To-morrow is the anniversary of our revolt against Allah and his Angels; how shall we celebrate it?"

They said with one voice, "Sire, for a long time we have been eager to hold a banquet at which the best among

mankind might be served roasted. If it should please your Majesty, we shall have such a banquet to-morrow."

"Agreed," said Sultan Iblis.

Instantly a number of fiends ascended to this world from All-Fiend-Land, and scouring over every country in it, carried off the best men in each. Thus there was lamentation all the world over. Thereupon, the guardian angels of the men followed them to the confines of All-Fiend-Land, and with loud voices complained to Iblis.

Iblis said, "Well, there is no use in your complaining now. To-morrow, as we sit down to dinner, remind us of the affair. Then, if there should be among the men one who has much of a quality that we do not possess, we will set him and all his brethren free."

The guardian angels consented to this, and retired.

The next morning there was great rejoicing in All-Fiend-Land. The imams and improvisatores among the subjects of Sultan Iblis went about celebrating his victories. His Majesty rose from bed in the midst of loud music, and after bathing in a great lake of flame, dressed, and sat down in his divan with a turban upon which shone diamonds, the least of which was bigger than a roc's egg.

His Majesty smoked a pipe, the bowl of which was a great well communicating with the lake of flame, and the tube of which, at the narrowest part, was so wide that a man standing on a lofty elephant with uplifted hand could drive through it without touching the concave above him.

The courtiers paid their homage to his Majesty one after another, calling him their great Sultan Iblis, who had warred in times of yore against heaven, and who owned the lake of flame into which more than half the world went.

Sultan Iblis said, "Now let the banquet be got ready."

Instantly great dishes and salvers were laid on a carpet, which was greater in extent than the greatest desert of

earth, and the men who were to be eaten at the feast were led near the well which formed the bowl of the Sultan's pipe, that they might be roasted.

Just then Sultan Iblis heard the sound of a great many trumpets. There was a tradition in All-Fiend-Land that the saints in Paradise were planning an attack on Sultan Iblis and his numerous subjects, to blot out their country altogether from the map of the universe, and that this scheme was out of mercy to the human race, to which the saints had originally belonged.

Sultan Iblis thought that the holy confederacy might have chosen that particular day to break upon the fiends unawares.

So he exclaimed, "Hollo! what is that?"

"Sire," said the courtiers of his Majesty, "they are the guardian angels of these men who are to be cooked."

"Well, I will keep my promise to them!" said Iblis, and pointing to one of the men, asked, "Who is this?"

"Sire, this is the kind man," said the fiend who cooked.

Iblis said, "As to kindness, we have plenty of it among us, so he goes to the spit."

"Now, who is this?" said Iblis, pointing to another.

"Sire, this is the munificent man," said the fiend.

"Well," said Sultan Iblis, "what of that? There is no end of the gold and gems we give men for adherence to our cause. So he goes to the spit."

"Now, who is this?" said Iblis, pointing to another man.

"Sire, this is the heroic man," said the fiend.

Iblis said, "Ah! in point of heroism very few can equal us and our subjects. The prodigies of our valour in our battles against Allah and his angels, and the noble self-sacrifice with which our followers rescued one another, are yet known in the seven heavens. So the heroic man also goes to the spit."

In this manner a great many men were chosen for the spit, and there was but one man yet remaining.

The men trembled from head to foot, for some of them had concluded that all hope was lost, while others fancied that between them and utter perdition there was yet but a hair-breadth in the shape of that one man.

The guardian angels also were equally concerned. Sultan Iblis asked who that one remaining man was.

The fiend replied, "Sire, this is the grateful man."

Instantly the face of Iblis grew pale. He exclaimed, "Alas! but for this one man, our feast should have been great! But he rescues all, and bids us starve to-day!"

"How, sire?" said the astonished courtiers.

"Why, my good courtiers," said he, "do you not know that gratitude is the only virtue that we do not possess? If we had it, we should not have rebelled against Allah, who showered his blessings upon every one of us."

At this, the courtiers of Sultan Iblis hung down their heads. The fiend that held the men released them all, and the guardian angels led them out of All-Fiend-Land, exclaiming in a chorus of celestial symphony—"The Grateful Man has starved the Fiends!"

Thus sixty Mandarins had told their tales. The Prince stood up, and the sixty Mandarins stood in a circle round him. The Prince addressed them as follows:—

"I am greatly indebted to you for the very kind manner in which you have amused me by leading from one story to another. If I remember right, we began with a curse on Opium, and ended with a blessing on that exalted virtue of mankind—Gratitude. I am grateful. But now go; I am reminded by the hunger of Iblis that I have forgotten my dinner."

The Mandarins with one voice, as of many trees touched by the breath of heaven, replied as follows :—

"Sire, if we have to any extent entertained you with our stories, the capacity to do so was evoked by your illustrious presence, which has ever enlarged our hearts with inspiration. To us your smile is an abundant feast. It has gladdened us, and we depart with joy."

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